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# ANCIENT MARINER



by *S. T.*  
*COLERIDGE*

*Edited by A. J. George*

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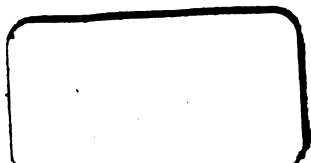


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**IN MEMORY OF HER BROTHER  
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**FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE**





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*S. J. Coleridge*

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# THE ANCIENT MARINER

By  
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

*EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES*

By  
ANDREW J. GEORGE, M.A.  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, HIGH SCHOOL, NEWTON, MASS.

"For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
And drunk the milk of Paradise."

D. C. HEATH & CO., PUBLISHERS  
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2 F O

To  
E. A. G.

Whether to me shall be allotted life,  
And, with life, power to accomplish aught of worth,  
That will be deemed no insufficient plea  
For having given the story of myself,  
Is all uncertain : but, beloved Friend !  
When, looking back, thou seest, in clearer view  
Than any liveliest sight of yesterday,  
That summer, under whose indulgent skies  
Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved  
Uncheck'd, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs,  
Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,  
Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,  
The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes  
Didst utter of the Lady Christabel ;  
And I, associate with such labor, steeped  
In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours,  
Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was found,  
After the perils of his moonlight ride,  
Near the loud waterfall ; or her who sate  
In misery near the miserable Thorn ;  
When thou dost to that summer turn thy thoughts,  
And hast before thee all which then we were,  
To thee, in memory of that happiness,  
It will be known, by thee at least, my Friend !  
Felt, that the history of a Poet's mind  
Is labor not unworthy of regard :  
To thee the work shall justify itself.

WORDSWORTH: *Prelude*, xiv.

## PREFACE.

A study of the genesis of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* suggests a consideration of those literary friendships which from time to time have reddened the blood and quickened the pulse of English poesy.

How beautiful are the revelations of the love of man for a man ! Witness the nobility, sweetness, and purity of Spenser's love for his gracious and generous friend, Sir Philip Sidney, that typical English gentleman "fashioned in virtue and gentle discipline"; Shakespeare's eternal passion for W. H., the only begetter of the Sonnets; Shelley's fervid devotion to Keats, the "youngest and dearest" of the tuneful choir; Tennyson's noble loyalty to Arthur Hallam, — a loyalty that could carry him through "calm despair and wild unrest" to "the fuller gain of after bliss"; Arnold's peacefully tender and delicate love of Clough, the Scholar-Gipsy.

That notable day at Racedown, in June, 1797, which revealed the natural kinship of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William and Dorothy Wordsworth, and "made three people one soul," has not been celebrated in any single

great poem ; yet it created that little volume, the *Lyrical Ballads*, which has exerted a greater influence on English literature than has any other single volume.

Natural and beautiful was the association of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and the history of our literature has nothing more interesting and suggestive than the friendship of these men. The circumstances under which this love was fostered and sustained, and in consequence of which each attained heights from which has been shed ever-enduring radiance, are worthy of frequent repetition. The fact that the main impulse to that poetry and criticism, which has been the most stimulating and productive "in its application of ideas to life, in its natural magic and moral profundity," was the creation of this friendship, is a sufficient reason for dwelling upon it here.

Professor Dowden says: "In 1797 there were two movements in our literature, each operating apart from the other, and each prone to excess, — naturalism, tending to a hard, dry, literal manner, unilluminated by the light of imagination ; romance, tending to become a coarse revel in material horrors. English poetry needed first that romance should be saved and ennobled by the presence and the power of truth, and, secondly, that naturalism, without losing any of its fidelity to fact, should be saved and ennobled by the presence and

{ power of imagination. And this was precisely what Coleridge and Wordsworth contributed to English poetry in their joint volume of the *Lyrical Ballads*, which, in consequence, may justly be described as marking if not making an epoch in the history of our literature. A volume which opens with 'The Ancient Mariner' and closes with the 'Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey' may well be considered one of the most remarkable in the whole range of English Poetry."

Wordsworth was born and educated in the north country district of Cumberland and Westmoreland. Having been nourished by "presences of Nature in the sky and in the earth," and having communed with those "visions of the hills and souls of lonely places" until his mind became peopled with forms sublime and fair, he entered Granta's Cloisters, there to be an inmate of a world within a world. He roamed —

"Delighted through the motley spectacle :  
Gowns, grave or gaudy, doctors, students, streets,  
Courts, cloisters, flocks of churches, gateways, towers;  
Migration strange for a stripling of the hills,  
A northern villager."

From here his vacation visits to France brought him to feel something of the storm and stress, the tumult and passion of the Revolution.

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very Heaven."

His earliest poetry is an expression of his sympathy with the cause of humanity, and *Descriptive Sketches* reveal the first tidal impulse, moving him from the harbor life he had been living, out upon the turbulent sea of political and social controversy. On quitting the university, he sought the companionship of that dear sister from whom he had been separated so long, and in 1795 they nestled, like two storm-tossed birds, in the Lodge at Racedown in Dorsetshire.

Coleridge was born in the south country of Devonshire; but, owing to the death of his father, he was sent to Christ's Hospital, London, at the age of nine. As a boy, Coleridge was exceedingly precocious; he took no pleasure in boyish sports, but was an incessant reader of books of the imagination, and an eager listener to fairy stories. What a contrast to the boy Wordsworth, as he roamed the fields, rowed upon the lake, or harried the ravens' nests, in that fair seed-time of his soul! At Christ's Hospital the life of Coleridge was by no means monotonous. With his study of the classics, and his love adventures, his reading of the Neo-Platonists, and his floggings by Bowyer, this prodigy attracted his fellows, and won the admiration of Lamb and Middleton. Alluding to this marvellous power which Coleridge exer-

rised at that early age, Lamb, a quarter of a century later, writes: "Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the dayspring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee — the dark pillar not yet turned — Samuel Taylor Coleridge — Logician, Metaphysician, Bard! — How have I seen the casual passer through the Cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration, to hear thee, in thy deep and sweet intonations, recite Homer in his Greek, or Pindar, while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the *inspired charity Joy!*"<sup>1</sup> Yet the heart of Coleridge was never weaned from his first love — the country. In speaking of this long exile, he says, —

"I was reared in  
The great city, pent 'mid the cloisters dim,  
And saw naught lovely but the sky and stars."

Wordsworth, in the *Prelude*, alludes to the severe homesickness —

"Of rivers, fields,  
And groves I speak to thee, my Friend! to thee  
Who yet a liveried school boy, in the depths  
Of the huge city, in the leaded roof  
Of that wide edifice, thy school and home,  
Wert used to lie and gaze upon the clouds  
Moving in heaven; or, of that pleasure tired,

<sup>1</sup> *Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago.*



To shut thine eyes, and by internal light  
See trees, and meadows, and thy native stream,  
Far distant."

We may believe that much of the tendency of Coleridge to live within himself in dreamy abstraction — yet a life most real — came to him as a relief from the separation from nature. Wordsworth selects this characteristic as worthy of special praise, —

"I have thought  
Of thee, thy learning, gorgeous eloquence,  
And all the strength and plumage of thy youth;  
Thy subtle speculations, toils abstruse  
Among the schoolmen, and Platonic forms  
Of wild ideal pageantry, shaped out  
From things well-matched or ill, and words for things;  
The self-created sustenance of a mind  
Debarred from Nature's living images,  
Compelled to be a life unto herself,  
And unrelentingly possessed by thirst  
Of greatness, love, and beauty."

The event which, strange to say, had the greatest influence upon Coleridge at this time, was the chance reading of Bowles's *Sonnets*; these had been sent to him by his friend Middleton, who had entered Cambridge a year before. In this slight volume of twenty sonnets he met "nature, unsophisticated by classic tradition," and was captivated by their freshness, originality, and simplicity. He copied them again and again, in

order that his friends might enjoy them with him. In writing to one of these, he says, "They have done my heart more good than all the other books I ever read excepting the Bible." It is difficult for us in these days to conceive of a time when such influences could be produced by a little quarto. But Coleridge was not the only one over whom it cast its spell, for Wordsworth was not long after captivated by it. He first met the volume as he was leaving London with friends for a walk; he seated himself in a recess on Westminster Bridge, and kept them waiting until he read the twenty sonnets. We may call these incidents and their results chance if we please, but "it chanced — eternal God that chance did guide."

If we wish to see what was the character of that spark which thus kindled two natures, we have but to read a few of Bowles's *Sonnets*. Although they may seem somewhat tame to us now, yet we must admit that they have what was needed to revive sick poetry, — directness of expression, genuine sensibility, and wholesome love of nature and man. Here is Bowles's sonnet "To the River Itchin," which should be compared with Coleridge's "To the River Otter," —

"Itchin, when I behold thy banks again,  
Thy crumbling margin, and thy silver breast,  
On which the self-same tints still seem to rest,

Why feels my heart the shiv'ring sense of pain?  
Is it that many a summer's day is past  
Since, in life's morn, I carol'd on thy side?  
Is it that oft, since then, my heart has sigh'd,  
As Youth and Hope's delusive gleams flew fast?  
Is it that those who circled on thy shore,  
Companions of my youth, now meet no more?  
Whate'er the cause, upon thy banks I bend,  
Sorrowing, yet feel such solace at my heart,  
As at the meeting of some long-lost friend,  
From whom, in happier hours, we wept to part."

Coleridge went to Cambridge two years after Wordsworth had taken his degree. As was to be expected, he entered more completely into the life of a scholar than did Wordsworth; he captured at least one prize, and was entered as competitor in several other contests. One of the important events in his university career was his meeting Wordsworth's *Descriptive Sketches*, and the consequent revelation of his instinctive critical faculty when he immediately asserted that they heralded the advent of a new star in the literary firmament; the other was his visit to Oxford and the meeting with Southey, when the Pantisocracy was hatched. On leaving Cambridge he settled at Bristol together with Southey, planned Pantisocracy, and marriage. The circle was now enlarged by the friendship of Lovell, Cottle, and Thomas Poole. The first edition of poems was pub-

lished, and *The Watchman* was planned. He now moved into the little cottage, at Nether Stowey, the grounds of which joined those of Poole. This cottage is marked by a tablet on which is inscribed, "Here Samuel Taylor Coleridge made his home — 1787-1800."

The Wordsworths had been living at Racedown, about thirty miles away, now for two years, and happy years they were, full of radiant enjoyment. They were separated from the world, but they had communion with each other and with nature. Coleridge, on hearing that the author of *Descriptive Sketches* was so near, took an early opportunity of visiting him. Dorothy tells us "the first thing that was read on that occasion was *The Ruined Cottage* with which Coleridge was so much delighted; and after tea he repeated to us two acts and a half of his tragedy *Osorio*. The next morning William read his tragedy *The Borderers*."

The significance of the dramas, *Osorio* and *The Borderers*, is that they reveal how these two men had been unconsciously moving toward each other, and away from the coarse demonology, horrors, ghosts, and robbers, to the great truths of which these were only the material symbols. Here was a return to the natural passions, — love and hatred, jealousy and revenge, and the retributions of conscience as they exist in man rather than in

nature. The distinctive differences in the two poems — the sublime symbolism of the one, and the seemingly commonplace literalness of the other, point directly to the fundamental difference in the mind and art of the two poets, and place them at opposite extremes of the romantic school.

That the meeting of these poets was a clear case of love at first sight is shown by the letters written to their friends at this time. Dorothy writes: "You had a great loss in not seeing Coleridge. He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit. . . . He has more of 'the poet's eye in fine frenzy rolling' than I ever witnessed. He has fine dark eyebrows and an overhanging forehead." Coleridge in his account of this visit says, "I speak with heartfelt sincerity, and, I think, unblinded judgment, when I tell you that I feel myself a little man by his side." When the Wordsworths returned this visit, Coleridge gives this beautiful picture of Dorothy: "W. and his exquisite sister are with me. She is a woman indeed! in mind and heart; for her person is such that if you expected to see a pretty woman, you would think her rather ordinary; if you expected to see an ordinary woman, you would think her pretty! but her manners are simple, ardent, impressive. In every motion her most innocent soul outbeams so brightly, that who saw would say, —

‘Guilt was a thing impossible to her.’

Her information various. Her eye watchful in minutest observation of nature ; and her taste a perfect electrometer.” Wordsworth wrote, “Coleridge is the most *wonderful* man I have met.” We are not surprised after reading these expressions of admiration that a month later the Wordsworths removed to Alfoxden near Nether Stowey, Somersetshire, where Coleridge resided.

The poets rambled over the Quantock Hills and held high communion. During one of these excursions, feeling the need of money, they planned a joint production for the *New Monthly Magazine*. We will let each one give us his version of this eventful undertaking. In the manuscript notes which Wordsworth left we find this record :—

“In the autumn of 1797, Mr. Coleridge, my sister, and myself started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon with a view to visit Linton and the Valley of Stones near to it ; and as our united funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem to be sent to the *New Monthly Magazine*. Accordingly, we set off, and proceeded along the Quantock Hills towards Watchet ; and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of the ‘Ancient Mariner,’ founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge’s invention, but certain parts I suggested ; for example, some crime was to be committed which should

bring upon the Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke's 'Voyages,' a day or two before, that while doubling Cape Horn, they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. 'Suppose,' said I, 'you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime.' The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time, at least, not a hint of it was given to me, and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous afterthought. We began the composition together on that, to me, memorable evening. I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular.

'And listened like a three years' child:  
The Mariner had his will.'

These trifling contributions, all but one, which Mr. C. has with unnecessary scrupulosity recorded, —

'And thou art long and lank, and brown  
As is the ribbed sea-sand,' —

slipped out of his mind, as well they might. As we endeavored to proceed conjointly (I speak of the same evening), our respective manners proved so widely different that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything

but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog. . . . The 'Ancient Mariner' grew and grew till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds; and we began to think of a volume which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of poems chiefly on supernatural subjects."

Coleridge in the *Biographia Literaria*, Chap. XIV., says: —

"During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset, diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in



every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves.

"In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*, in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.

Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

"With this view I wrote the *Ancient Mariner*, and was preparing, among other poems, the *Dark Ladie*, and the *Christabel*, in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth's industry had proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter. Mr. Wordsworth added two or three poems written in his own character, in the impassioned, lofty, and sustained diction which is characteristic of his genius. In this form the *Lyrical Ballads* were published."

In 1795 Lovell introduced Coleridge to Joseph Cottle, a Bristol printer, bookseller, and poetaster. The next year the first edition of Coleridge's poems was published with the imprint "Joseph Cottle, Bristol." And when the united efforts of Coleridge and Wordsworth had produced—instead of the *Ancient Mariner* as was projected—twenty-three poems, of course the *New Monthly Magazine* could not handle them, so, naturally enough, Cottle bargained for the lot. Thus it was that he became as immortal as the poets themselves. The sale was so slow that Cottle transferred a large part of the five hundred volumes to Arch, a London bookseller. Consequently only a few of the copies of the first edition have on the titlepage "Joseph Cottle, Bristol," while the others have "London: Printed for J. & H. Arch, Gracechurch-Street." Longman purchased the copyright with others, and as it was considered of no value it was restored to Cottle, who presented it to Wordsworth.

This was the *annus mirabilis* in the poetic career of Coleridge. "His hand already on the latch, now opened the magic casements on the perilous seas sailed by the *Ancient Mariner*, and the fairylands of *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan*."

With the proceeds from the *Lyrical Ballads* in their pockets they concluded to visit Germany, and in Sep-

tember, 1798, they went to Hamburg, where they met Klopstock, the "German Milton." At Hamburg, Coleridge left the Wordsworths and went to Göttingen, plunged into metaphysics, and the world got no more *Ancient Mariners*. And here it is worth while to note that Coleridge produced all of his poetry, which is of the first order, directly under the influence of Wordsworth. It is to be regretted that no adequate answer to the question, "What was the reciprocal influence of these men upon each other?" has ever been given. We may believe that each evoked the best in the other, that Wordsworth gained no less than Coleridge by the friendship, for he wrote: "Thou hast enfranchised my thought from its earlier fear; thou hast taught me to take more rational proportions, and completed the discipline and consummation of a poet's mind."

"Coleridge was the ivy," says Mr. Alois Brandl, "which at last found the oak on which it could lean and unfold its luxuriance. But with him the act of twining and climbing was more important than the result; with Wordsworth the result was the chief thing."

Mr. J. Dykes Campbell says: "It was a rich and fruitful time for all three — seed-time at once and harvest; and its happy influences spread far beyond their own individual selves. The gulf-stream which rose in the Quantocks warmed and is still warming distant shores.

Dorothy's quick sympathy, keen observation, and rapid suggestion were invaluable to both. . . . Nor was the influence, in action and reaction, of the men on one another less potent. Coleridge was by far the more active, as well as the finer and more penetrating, and the immense receptiveness of Wordsworth must have acted as a strong incentive to its exercise. And this is true, I believe, notwithstanding that there are more distinct traces of Wordsworth's influence on Coleridge's poetry than of the converse."

Mr. Stopford Brooke says: "Coleridge had been a preacher, and in some of his earlier pieces there is a disagreeable note of pulpit exhortation. . . . But the moment he, under Wordsworth's influence, began to express himself only for the pleasure he had in his emotion, or to shape the beauty he saw for the love of it alone, he ceased to be the man of talent and rose into the man of genius. . . . Wordsworth not only kindled, but tempered his genius. His imitative work died, he lost his extravagance, and he descended into as much reality as his cloud-capped character would permit him to attain. Indeed, it was impossible not to draw closer to the simple truth of things when he lived with one who, like Wordsworth, considered the lilies of the field as Christ considered them, and whose joy and ardour were like the morning. For this brief

time then, Coleridge felt that rapture of life which inevitably creates."

Wordsworth was disappointed because Coleridge wrote so little after 1798. In a letter which I received recently from Mr. Aubrey de Vere, the friend and interpreter of Wordsworth, occurs the following interesting comment upon this subject:—

"Wordsworth expressed to me more than once his conviction that if Coleridge had kept to Poetry after his twenty-sixth year (when he deserted it), in place of taking to metaphysics, he would have been the chief poet of modern times."

The *Ancient Mariner*, *Kubla Khan*, *Love*, and *Christabel*, all written in 1797–1798, represent the high watermark in the work of Coleridge. "Here," says Mr. Saintsbury, "the stutters and flashes of Blake became coherent speech and steady blaze; here poetry, which for a century and a half had been curbing her voice to a genteel whisper, or raising it only to a forensic declamation, which had at best allowed a few word-notes to escape here and there as if by mistake, spoke out loud and clear. Here is what one hears at most three or four times in English, at most ten or twelve times in all literature,—the first note,—with its endless echo-promise of a new poetry. You will find them nowhere from Chaucer to Cowper."

Wordsworth and his sister wintered in Goslar, an old imperial town in Hanover. In the spring of 1799 they returned to England and took up their abode at Sockburn. Coleridge reached Stowey in July of the same year, and in October, in company with Cottle, visited the Wordsworths. It was at this time that they made the tour of the Lake Country and became attracted to the cottage at Town End, Grasmere, bearing the sign of the "Dove and Olive Bough," which Wordsworth leased; and when he and his sister set up housekeeping in December, Coleridge went to London and began writing for the *Morning Post*; here his wife and son Hartley joined him. In February, 1800, he left the *Post* and went to work on his translation of *Wallenstein*. He visited Lamb at Pentonville, and Mrs. Coleridge with Hartley returned to Bristol. Of this visit Lamb wrote: "I am living in a continual feast. Coleridge has been with me now for nigh three weeks." Having completed his translation, he took his family to visit the Wordsworths at Dove Cottage. After a month's sojourn here they settled at Greta Hall, Keswick, where Southey and his wife—a sister of Mrs. Coleridge—lived. Thus at the last year of the century we find the two poets living in the same neighborhood. That they frequently met at Dove Cottage, Greta Hall, or at the little hamlet Wythburn on Lake Thirlmere, is cer-

tain from Wordsworth's poetry and Dorothy's *Journal*. An interesting memorial in the form of a mural stone marks their trysting-place at the head of Thirlmere. Upon it are the initials of the friends who held high converse there.

Of this Wordsworth wrote : —

" We worked until the Initials took  
 Shapes that defied a scornful look.  
 . . . . .  
 And fail not thou, loved Rock ! to keep  
 Thy charge when we are laid asleep."

Canon Rawnsley, writing from Keswick, 1894, says of the Coleridge of this time : " To-day in Keswick the Coleridge of those past days is Coleridge still. He has the fire of a soldier, the fervor of a preacher, and the singleness of heart that holds that ' name, wealth, and fame seem cheap to him beside the interests of what he believes to be the truth and will of his Maker.' "

Soon, however, the clouds began to gather, and the storm broke upon him ; before its pitiless blasts he was driven like his own Mariner —

" Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
 Alone on a wide, wide sea."

Ill health, domestic discord, and the " Kendal Black Drop " —

"Did like a tempest strong  
Come to him thus, and drove the weary wight along."

From this time until he finds a haven with the Gillmans at Highgate, his life is one long struggle against wind and wave, relieved now and then by a gleam of sunlight in the presence of faithful and devoted friends.

Perhaps the most pathetic scene in all these years is that evening at Coleorton, January, 1807, when visiting the Wordsworths, who had gone hither for the winter at the invitation of Sir George Beaumont, Coleridge listened to the reading of the *Prelude* dedicated to himself, and after the "long-sustained song finally closed," he wrote that tender and beautiful poem, beginning—

"O Friend! O Teacher! God's great gift to me!  
Into my heart have I received that lay  
More than historic, that prophetic lay  
Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)  
Of the foundations and the building up  
Of thy own Spirit thou hast loved to tell  
What *may* be told, by words revealable.  
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.  
.  
.  
O Friend, too well thou know'st, of what sad years  
The long suppression has benumb'd my soul,  
That, even as life returns upon the drown'd,  
The unusual joy awoke a throng of pains—  
Keen pangs of Love, awakening, as a babe  
Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart!



Sense of past youth, and manhood come in vain;  
An opinion given, and knowledge won in vain;  
And all, which I had cull'd in wood-walks wild,  
And all which patient toil had rear'd, and all  
Commune with thee had open'd out — but flowers  
Strew'd on my corse, and borne upon my bier,  
In the same coffin, for the self-same grave."<sup>1</sup>

From this time until 1816, when he places himself under the care of Dr. Gillman, he is stemming the tide with what strength he has, and enters the sphere of criticism in his Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton and *Biographia Literaria*. "From his ninth year he had been a wanderer and a sojourner, finding no city to dwell in, and now when he was at his wit's end, tossed in a sea of troubles, the waves suddenly stilled, and he felt that he had reached his desired haven."

The picture which Carlyle gives of Coleridge at Highgate is exceedingly graphic.

In 1824 Carlyle wrote to his brother John: "I have seen many curiosities; not the least of them I reckon Coleridge. . . . Figure a fat, flabby, incurvated personage, at once short, rotund, and relaxed, with a watery mouth, a snuffy nose, a pair of strange, brown, timid, yet earnest-looking eyes, a high, tapering brow, and a great bush of grey hair, and you have some faint idea of Coleridge.

<sup>1</sup> Original Version.

He is a kind, good soul, full of religion and affection and poetry and animal magnetism."

The above is the rough sketch; here is the finished portrait: "Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, in those years, looking down on London and its smoke-tumult, like a sage escaped from the inanity of life's battle; attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. . . . He had, especially among young inquiring men, a higher than literary, a kind of prophetic or magician character. . . . No talk in his century, or in any other, could be more inspiring."<sup>1</sup>

What Matthew Arnold says of Joubert can be fittingly said of Coleridge: "He lived in the Philistines' day, in a place and time when almost every idea current in literature had the mark of Dagon upon it, and not the mark of the children of light. Nay, the children of light were as yet hardly so much as heard of: the Canaanite was then in the land. Still, there were even then a few, who, nourished on some secret tradition, or illumined, perhaps, by divine inspiration, kept aloof from the reigning superstitions, never bowed the knee to the gods of Canaan; and one of these few was called — Joubert."

We cannot more fittingly close this review of Coleridge

<sup>1</sup> Carlyle, *Life of John Sterling*.

than by quoting the soothing words of Cardinal Newman, who saw in Coleridge's works a proof that the mind of England was no longer satisfied with the husks of the last century, and who himself had, in the midst of the storm and tumult of his own time, prayed that some "kindly light" would lead him.

"After trial and temptation; after sorrow and pain; after daily dyings to the world; after daily risings into holiness; at length comes that 'rest that remaineth unto the people of God.' After the fever of life; after wearinesses and sicknesses; fightings and despondings; struggling and failing, struggling and succeeding; after all the changes and chances of this troubled and unhealthy state, at length comes death, at length the White Throne of God, at length the Beatific Vision."

Coleridge died July 25, 1834, and was buried in Highgate churchyard.

The text of this edition is that of *Sibylline Leaves*, 1817. As there are many variations of text, mainly in the editions of 1798, 1800, and 1817, I have printed the text of 1798 in an appendix, and the changes in that of 1800. I have also reproduced from the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* the pages which preceded the *Ancient Mariner*.

A. J. GEORGE.

BROOKLINE, MASS., April, 1897.

## INTRODUCTION.

"Nothing can surpass the melodious richness of words which he heaps around his images, — images not glaring in themselves, but which are always affecting to the very verge of tears, because they have all been formed and nourished in the recesses of one of the most deeply musing spirits that ever breathed forth its inspirations in the majestic language of England."

PROF. JOHN WILSON.

"Endowed with so glorious a gift of song, and only not fully master of his poetic means, because of the very versatility of his artistic power and the very variety and catholicity of his youthful sympathies, it is unhappily but too certain that the world has lost much by that perversity of conspiring accidents which so unhappily silenced Coleridge's muse. And the loss is the more trying to posterity because he seems, to a not, I think, too curiously considering criticism, to have once actually struck that very chord which would have sounded most movingly beneath his touch."

H. D. TRAILL.

"Coleridge's poetical performance is like some exotic plant, just managing to blossom a little in the somewhat un-English air of his southwestern birthplace, but never quite well there. What shapes itself for criticism as the main phenomenon of Coleridge's poetic life is not, as with most true poets, the gradual development of a poetic gift, determined, enriched, retarded, by the actual circumstances of the poet's life, but the sudden blossoming, through one short season, of such a gift already perfect in its kind, which thereafter deteriorates as suddenly, with something like premature old age."

WALTER PATER.

"One is a little apt to forget that Coleridge's metaphysical bent was no less innate than his poetical; even at Christ's Hospital his spiritual potation was a half-and-half, in which the waters of a more or less authentic Castalay, and the 'philosophic draughts' from such fountains as Jamblichus and Plotinus, were equally mingled. Whether or not a born 'maker,' he was certainly a born theorist; and we believe not only that under all his most important artistic achievements there was a basis in intellectual theory, but that the theory, so far from being an alien and disturbing presence, did duty as the unifying principle which co-ordinated the whole."

WILLIAM WATSON.

"What Coleridge did well was unique, but it was very little; and the volume we have from him influences us with all the sadness that a garden does in which two or three beautiful flowers rise and flower perfectly, but in which the rest are choked with weeds and run to seed. And to those who can compare the things of art with the things of soul and heart, the analogy has its own profound moral lesson. . . . Surely few men have ever loved mankind more than this large-hearted creature of the sunny mist. And inasmuch as he loved much, his faults are forgiven."

S. A. BROOKE.

"The brilliant Coleridge of Nether Stowey, the buoyant young poet-philosopher who had not been to Germany, was a curious compound of unperfectly fused elements . . . but he was, above all, essentially and intrinsically a poet. The first genuine manifestations of his genius are the poems which he wrote before he was twenty-six. The germ of all Coleridge's utterances may be found — by a little ingenuity — in the *Ancient Mariner*."

LESLIE STEPHEN.

"A brief dawn of unsurpassed promise and achievement: 'a trouble' as of 'clouds and weeping rain'; then a long summer evening's work done by 'the set-

ting sun's pathetic light' — such was Coleridge's day, the after-glow of which is still in the sky. I am sure that the temple, with all the rubble which blended with its marble, must have been a grander whole than any we are able to reconstruct for ourselves from the stones that lie about the field. The living Coleridge was ever his own apology — men and women who neither shared nor ignored his shortcomings, not only loved him, but honored and followed him. . . . Hatred as well as love may be blind, but friendship has eyes, and their testimony may wisely be used in correcting our own impressions."

J. DYKES CAMPBELL.

"Coleridge certainly was a main influence in showing the English mind how it could emancipate itself from the vulgarizing tyranny of common sense, and teaches it to recognize in the imagination an important factor not only in the happiness but in the destiny of man. . . . I cannot think it a personal peculiarity, but a matter of universal experience, that more bits of Coleridge have introduced themselves in my memory than of any other poet who delighted my youth, unless I should except the sonnets of Shakespeare. This argues perfectness of expression."

J. R. LOWELL.

"In one of his pieces of blank verse Coleridge has described a vision of the graceful, white-armed Isabel, reflected in the placid waters of a lonely stream; but let a blossom of willow-herb or a fox-glove bell be tossed upon the pool, and the charm is broken,—

- All that phantom-world so fair  
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,  
And each mis-shape the other.'

The description might stand for that of Coleridge's own poetry personified, with its visionary beauty and its harmony of exquisite colours; and what shall be said of the critic who flings his heavy stone of formula and scatters the loveliness?"

EDWARD DOWDEN.

"Of Coleridge's best verses I venture to affirm that the world has nothing like them and can never have; that they are of the highest kind and their own. An age that should neglect or forget Coleridge might neglect or forget any poet that ever lived. That may be said of him which can hardly be said of any but the greatest among men,—that come what may to the world in course of time, it will never see his place filled."

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.



"His soul fared forth (as from the deep home-grove  
The father-songster plies the hour-long quest).  
To feed his soul-brood hungering in the nest;  
But his warm Heart, the mother-bird, above  
Their callow fledging progeny still hove  
With tented roof of wings and fostering breast  
Till the Soul fed the soul-brood. Richly blest  
From Heaven their growth, whose food was Human Love."

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

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“ He would entice that other Man to hear  
His music, and to view his imagery :  
And sooth, these two were each to the other dear;  
No livelier love in such a place could be :  
There did they dwell, from earthly labour free,  
As happy spirits as were ever seen;  
If but a bird, to keep them company,  
Or butterfly sate down, they were, I ween,  
As pleased as if the same had been a Maiden-queen.”

# THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

—◆—  
IN SEVEN PARTS.  
—◆—

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit? et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quæ loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in Tabulâ, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernæ vitæ minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus. — T. BURNET: ARCHÆOL. PHIL., p. 68.

## ARGUMENT.

How a Ship, having passed the Line, was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancient Mariner came back to his own Country. (1798.)

## PART I.

It is an ancient Mariner,  
And he stoppeth one of three.  
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,  
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

An ancient Mariner  
meeteth three  
Gallants bidden  
to a wedding-  
feast, and detain-  
eth one.

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide, 5  
And I am next of kin;  
The guests are met, the feast is set:  
Mayst hear the merry din.'

He holds him with his skinny hand,  
 'There was a ship,' quoth he. 10  
 'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!'  
 Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale. He holds him with his glittering eye —  
 The Wedding-Guest stood still,  
 And listens like a three-years' child : 15  
 The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone :  
 He cannot choose but hear ;  
 And thus spake on that ancient man,  
 The bright-eyed Mariner. 20

'The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,  
 Merrily did we drop  
 Below the kirk, below the hill,  
 Below the light-house top.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with good wind and fair weather, till it reached the Line. The Sun came up upon the left, 25  
 Out of the sea came he !  
 And he shone bright, and on the right  
 Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,  
 Till over the mast at noon — ' 30  
 The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,  
 For he heard the loud bassoon.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER. 3

The bride hath paced into the hall,  
 Red as a rose is she ;  
 Nodding their heads before her goes  
 The merry minstrelsy.

35 The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music, but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,  
 Yet he cannot choose but hear ;  
 And thus spake on that ancient man,  
 The bright-eyed Mariner.

40

'And now the Storm-blast came, and he  
 Was tyrannous and strong :  
 He struck with his o'ertaking wings,  
 And chased us south along.

The ship, driven by a storm toward the south pole.

With sloping masts and dipping prow, 45  
 As who pursued with yell and blow  
 Still treads the shadow of his foe,  
 And forward bends his head,  
 The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,  
 And southward aye we fled. 50

And now there came both mist and snow,  
 And it grew wondrous cold :  
 And ice, mast-high, came floating by,  
 As green as emerald.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts 55  
 Did send a dismal sheen :  
 Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —  
 The ice was all between.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds, where no living thing was to be seen.

The ice was here, the ice was there,  
 The ice was all around : 60  
 It cracked and growled, and roared and  
 howled,  
 Like noises in a swound !

Till a great sea-  
 bird, called the  
 Albatross, came  
 through the  
 snow-fog, and  
 was received with  
 great joy and  
 hospitality.

At length did cross an Albatross,  
 Thorough the fog it came ;  
 As if it had been a Christian soul, 65  
 We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,  
 And round and round it flew.  
 The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;  
 The helmsman steered us through ! 70

And lo! the Al-  
 batross proveth a  
 bird of good  
 omen, and fol-  
 loweth the ship  
 as it returned  
 northward,  
 through fog and  
 floating ice.

And a good south wind sprung up behind ;  
 The Albatross did follow,  
 And every day, for food or play,  
 Came to the mariners' hollo !

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, 75  
 It perched for vespers nine ;  
 Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,  
 Glimmered the white moon-shine.'

The ancient Mar-  
 iner inhospitably  
 killeth the pious  
 bird of good  
 omen.

' God save thee, ancient Mariner, 79  
 From the fiends, that plague thee thus !—  
 Why look'st thou so ? ' — With my cross-bow  
 I shot the Albatross.

## PART II.

The Sun now rose upon the right :  
 Out of the sea came he,  
 Still hid in mist, and on the left 85  
 Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,  
 But no sweet bird did follow,  
 Nor any day for food or play  
 Came to the mariners' hollo ! 90

And I had done a hellish thing,  
 And it would work 'em woe :  
 For all averred, I had killed the bird  
 That made the breeze to blow.  
 Ah wretch ! said they, the bird to slay, 95  
 That made the breeze to blow !

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,  
 The glorious Sun uprist :  
 Then all averred, I had killed the bird  
 That brought the fog and mist. 100  
 'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,  
 That bring the fog and mist.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,  
 The furrow followed free ;  
 We were the first that ever burst 105  
 Into that silent sea.

His ship-mates  
 cry out against  
 the ancient Mari-  
 ner, for killing  
 the bird of good  
 luck.

But when the fog  
 cleared off, they  
 justify the same,  
 and thus make  
 themselves ac-  
 complices in  
 the crime.

The fair breeze  
 continues; the  
 ship enters the  
 Pacific Ocean  
 and sails north-  
 ward, even till it  
 reaches the Line



The ship hath  
been suddenly  
becalm'd.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,  
'Twas sad as sad could be ;  
And we did speak only to break  
The silence of the sea !

110

' All in a hot and copper sky,  
The bloody Sun, at noon,  
Right up above the mast did stand,  
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,  
We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;  
As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.

115

And the Albatross  
begins to  
be avenged.

Water, water, everywhere,  
And all the boards did shrink ;  
Water, water, everywhere,  
Nor any drop to drink.

120

The very deep did rot : O Christ !  
That ever this should be !  
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs  
Upon the slimy sea.

125

About, about, in reel and rout  
The death-fires danced at night ;  
The water, like a witch's oils,  
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

130

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER. 7

And some in dreams assurèd were  
Of the spirit that plagued us so :  
Nine fathom deep he had followed us  
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought, 135  
Was withered at the root ;  
We could not speak, no more than if  
We had been choked with soot.

Ah, well-a-day ! what evil looks  
Had I from old and young !  
Instead of the cross, the Albatross  
About my neck was hung.

A Spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning which the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

140 The ship-mates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner; in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

---

PART III.

There passed a weary time. Each throat  
Was parched, and glazed each eye.  
A weary time ! a weary time !  
How glazed each weary eye,  
When looking westward, I beheld  
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

145

At first it seemed a little speck,  
And then it seemed a mist ;  
It moved and moved, and took at last  
A certain shape, I wist.

150

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !  
 And still it neared and neared :  
 As if it dodged a water-sprite, 155  
 It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer  
 approach, it  
 seemeth him to  
 be a ship; and  
 at a dear ransom  
 he freeth his  
 speech from the  
 bonds of thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
 We could nor laugh nor wail ;  
 Through utter drought all dumb we stood !  
 I bit my arm, I sucked the blood, 160  
 And cried, A sail ! a sail !

A flash of joy :

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
 Agape they heard me call :  
 Gramercy ! they for joy did grin,  
 And all at once their breath drew in, 165  
 As they were drinking all.

And horror fol-  
 lows. For can it  
 be a *ship* that  
 comes onward  
 without wind or  
 tide?

See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !  
 Hither to work us weal ;  
 Without a breeze, without a tide,  
 She steadies with upright keel ! 170

The western wave was all a-flame.  
 The day was well-nigh done !  
 Almost upon the western wave  
 Rested the broad bright Sun ;  
 When that strange shape drove suddenly 175  
 Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth him  
 but the skeleton  
 of a ship.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,  
 (Heaven's Mother send us grace !)  
 As if through a dungeon-grate he peered  
 With broad and burning face. 180

Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)

How fast she nears and nears !

Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,

Like restless gossameres ?

Are those her ribs through which the Sun 185

Did peer, as through a grate ?

And is that Woman all her crew ?

Is that a Death ? and are there two ?

Is Death that Woman's mate ?

And its ribs are  
seen as bars on  
the face of the  
setting Sun.  
The Spectre-  
Woman and her  
Death-mate, and  
no other on board  
the skeleton ship.

Her lips were red, her looks were free, 190

Her locks were yellow as gold :

Her skin was as white as leprosy,

The Night-mare, Life-in-Death was she,

Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Like vessel, like  
crew !

The naked hulk alongside came,

And the twain were casting dice ;

'The game is done ! I've won ! I've won !'

Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

195 Death and Life-  
in-Death have  
diced for the  
ship's crew and  
she (the latter)  
winneth the an-  
cient Mariner.

The Sun's rim dips ; the stars rush out :

At one stride comes the dark ;

With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,

Off shot the spectre-bark.

No twilight  
within the courts  
200 of the Sun.

We listened and looked sideways up !

Fear at my heart, as at a cup,

My life-blood seemed to sip !

The stars were dim, and thick the night,

The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed

white ;

At the rising of  
the Moon,

205

From the sails the dew did drip —  
 Till clomb above the eastern bar  
 The hornèd Moon, with one bright star 210  
 Within the nether tip.

One after another,  
 One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,  
 Too quick for groan or sigh,  
 Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,  
 And cursed me with his eye. 215

His shipmates drop down dead.  
 Four times fifty living men,  
 (And I heard nor sigh nor groan)  
 With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,  
 They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.  
 The souls did from their bodies fly — 220  
 They fled to bliss or woe !  
 And every soul, it passed me by,  
 Like the whizz of my cross-bow !

---

 PART IV.

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a Spirit is talking to him;  
 'I fear thee, ancient Mariner !  
 I fear thy skinny hand ! 225  
 And thou art long and lank, and brown,  
 As is the ribbed sea-sand.

But the ancient Mariner assur-eth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.  
 I fear thee and thy glittering eye,  
 And thy skinny hand, so brown.' —  
 Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest ! 230  
 This body dropt not down.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER. 11

Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
Alone on a wide wide sea !  
And never a saint took pity on  
My soul in agony. 235

The many men, so beautiful !  
And they all dead did lie :  
And a thousand thousand slimy things  
Lived on ; and so did I. He despiseth the  
creatures of the  
calm.

I looked upon the rotting sea,  
And drew my eyes away ;  
I looked upon the rotting deck,  
And there the dead men lay. 240 And envieth that  
they should live,  
and so many lie  
dead.

I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray ;  
But or ever a prayer had gusht,  
A wicked whisper came, and made  
My heart as dry as dust. 245

I closed my lids, and kept them close,  
And the balls like pulses beat ;  
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the  
sky 250  
Lay like a load on my weary eye,  
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,  
Nor rot nor reek did they :  
The look with which they looked on me 255  
Had never passed away. But the curse  
liveth for him in  
the eye of the  
dead men.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell  
 A spirit from on high ;  
 But oh ! more horrible than that  
 Is the curse in a dead man's eye ! 260  
 Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,  
 And yet I could not die.

In loneliness and fixedness he  
 yearneth towards the journeying  
 Moon, and the stars that still  
 sojourn, yet still move on-  
 ward: and every-where the blue  
 sky belongs to them, and is  
 their appointed rest, and their  
 native country and their own  
 natural homes, which they enter  
 unannounced, as lords that are  
 certainly expected, and yet  
 there is a silent joy at their ar-  
 rival.

The moving Moon went up the sky,  
 And nowhere did abide :  
 Softly she was going up,  
 And a star or two beside — 265

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,  
 Like April hoar-frost spread ;  
 But where the ship's huge shadow lay,  
 The charmed water burnt away 270  
 A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,  
 I watched the water-snakes :

By the light of the Moon he be-  
 holdeth God's creatures of the  
 great calm.

They moved in tracks of shining white,  
 And when they reared, the elfish light 275  
 Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship  
 I watched their rich attire :  
 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,  
 They coiled and swam ; and every track 280  
 Was a flash of golden fire.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER. 13

O happy living things ! no tongue  
 Their beauty might declare :  
 A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
 And I blessed them unaware :  
 Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
 And I blessed them unaware.

**Their beauty and  
their happiness.**

285

**He blesseth them  
in his heart.**

The self-same moment I could pray ;  
And from my neck so free  
The Albatross fell off, and sank  
Like lead into the sea.

**The spell begins to break,**

290

**PART V.**

O sleep ! it is a gentle thing,  
Beloved from pole to pole !  
To Mary Queen the praise be given !  
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,      295  
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,  
That had so long remained,  
I dreamed that they were filled with dew ;  
And when I awoke, it rained.

**By grace of the  
holy Mother, the  
ancient Mariner  
is refreshed with  
rain.**

300

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,  
My garments all were dank ;  
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,  
And still my body drank.



I moved, and could not feel my limbs : 305  
 I was so light, — almost  
 I thought that I had died in sleep,  
 And was a blessèd ghost.

He heareth  
 sounds and seeth  
 strange sights  
 and commotions  
 in the sky and  
 the element.

And soon I heard a roaring wind :  
 It did not come anear ; 310  
 But with its sound it shook the sails,  
 That were so thin and sere.

The upper air burst into life !  
 And a hundred fire-flags sheen,  
 To and fro they were hurried about ! 315  
 And to and fro, and in and out,  
 The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,  
 And the sails did sigh like sedge ;  
 And the rain poured down from one black  
 cloud ; 320  
 The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still  
 The Moon was at its side :  
 Like waters shot from some high crag,  
 The lightning fell with never a jag, 325  
 A river steep and wide.

The bodies of the  
 ship's crew are  
 inspirited, and  
 the ship moves  
 on.

The loud wind never reached the ship,  
 Yet now the ship moved on !  
 Beneath the lightning and the Moon  
 The dead men gave a grcan. 330

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,  
 Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;  
 It had been strange, even in a dream,  
 To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on ; 335  
 Yet never a breeze up-blew ;  
 The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,  
 Where they were wont to do ;  
 They raised their limbs like lifeless tools —  
 We were a ghastly crew. 340

The body of my brother's son  
 Stood by me, knee to knee :  
 The body and I pulled at one rope,  
 But he said nought to me. —

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner !'  
 Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest !  
 'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,  
 Which to their corses came again,  
 But a troop of spirits blest :

345 But not by the  
 souls of the men,  
 nor by dæmons  
 of earth or mid-  
 dle air, but by a  
 blessed troop of  
 angelic spirits,  
 sent down by the  
 invocation of the  
 guardian saint.

For when it dawned — they dropped their  
 arms, 350  
 And clustered round the mast ;  
 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,  
 And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,  
 Then darted to the Sun ; 355  
 Slowly the sounds came back again,  
 Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky  
 I heard the skylark sing ;  
 Sometimes all little birds that are, 360  
 How they seemed to fill the sea and air  
 With their sweet jargoning !

And now 'twas like all instruments,  
 Now like a lonely flute ;  
 And now it is an angel's song, 365  
 That makes the Heavens be mute.

It ceased ; yet still the sails made on  
 A pleasant noise till noon,  
 A noise like of a hidden brook  
 In the leafy month of June, 370  
 That to the sleeping woods all night  
 Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,  
 Yet never a breeze did breathe :  
 Slowly and smoothly went the ship, 375  
 Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome  
 Spirit from the  
 south pole  
 carries on the  
 ship as far as the  
 Line, in obedi-  
 ence to the  
 angelic troop, but  
 still requireth  
 vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,  
 From the land of mist and snow,  
 The spirit slid : and it was he  
 That made the ship to go. 380  
 The sails at noon left off their tune,  
 And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,  
 Had fixed her to the ocean :  
 But in a minute she 'gan stir, 385  
 With a short uneasy motion —  
 Backwards and forwards half her length,  
 With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,  
 She made a sudden bound : 390  
 It flung the blood into my head,  
 And I fell down in a swoond.

How long in that same fit I lay,  
 I have not to declare ;  
 But ere my living life returned,  
 I heard and in my soul discerned  
 Two Voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?  
 By Him Who died on cross,  
 With his cruel bow he laid full low  
 The harmless Albatross.

The Polar Spirit's fellow-dæmons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

The spirit who bideth by himself  
 In the land of mist and snow,  
 He loved the bird that loved the man  
 Who shot him with his bow.' 405

The other was a softer voice,  
 As soft as honey-dew :  
 Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,  
 And penance more will do.'

## PART VI.

## FIRST VOICE.

‘But tell me, tell me ! speak again, 410  
 Thy soft response renewing —  
 What makes that ship drive on so fast?  
 What is the Ocean doing?’

## SECOND VOICE.

‘Still as a slave before his lord,  
 The Ocean hath no blast ; 415  
 His great bright eye most silently  
 Up to the Moon is cast —

If he may know which way to go ;  
 For she guides him smooth or grim.  
 See, brother, see ! how graciously 420  
 She looketh down on him.’

## FIRST VOICE.

The Mariner  
 hath been cast  
 into a trance; for  
 the angelic power  
 causeth the ves-  
 sel to drive north-  
 ward faster than  
 human life could  
 endure.

‘But why drives on that ship so fast,  
 Without or wave or wind?’

## SECOND VOICE.

‘The air is cut away before,  
 And closes from behind. 425

Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !  
 Or we shall be belated :  
 For slow and slow that ship will go,  
 When the Mariner’s trance is abated.’

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER. 19

I woke, and we were sailing on 430  
As in a gentle weather :  
'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high,  
The dead men stood together.

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

All stood together on the deck,  
For a charnel-dungeon fitter : 435  
All fixed on me their stony eyes,  
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,  
Had never passed away :  
I could not draw my eyes from theirs, 440  
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt : once more  
I viewed the ocean green,  
And looked far forth, yet little saw  
Of what had else been seen — 445

The curse is finally expiated.

Like one, that on a lonesome road  
Doth walk in fear and dread,  
And having once turned round walks on,  
And turns no more his head ;  
Because he knows, a frightful fiend 450  
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,  
Nor sound nor motion made :  
Its path was not upon the sea,  
In ripple or in shade. 455

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek  
 Like a meadow-gale of Spring —  
 It mingled strangely with my fears,  
 Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460  
 Yet she sailed softly too :  
 Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —  
 On me alone it blew.

And the ancient  
 Mariner behold-  
 eth his native  
 country.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed  
 The light-house top I see? 465  
 Is this the hill? is this the kirk?  
 Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,  
 And I with sobs did pray —  
 Oh, let me be awake, my God ! 470  
 Or let me sleep alway.

The harbor-bay was clear as glass,  
 So smoothly it was strewn !  
 And on the bay the moonlight lay,  
 And the shadow of the Moon. 475

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,  
 That stands above the rock :  
 The moonlight steeped in silentness  
 The steady weathercock.

The angelic  
 spirits leave the  
 dead bodies.

And the bay was white with silent light, 480  
 Till rising from the same,  
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,  
 In crimson colors came.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER. 21

A little distance from the prow  
Those crimson shadows were : 485  
I turned my eyes upon the deck —  
O Christ ! what saw I there?

And appear in  
their own forms  
of light.

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,  
And, by the holy rood !  
A man all light, a seraph-man, 490  
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand :  
It was a heavenly sight !  
They stood as signals to the land,  
Each one a lovely light ; 495

This seraph-band, each waved his hand ;  
No voice did they impart —  
No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank  
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars, 500  
I heard the Pilot's cheer ;  
My head was turned perforce away,  
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,  
I heard them coming fast : 505  
Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy  
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third — I heard his voice :  
It is the Hermit good !  
He singeth loud his godly hymns 510



That he makes in the wood.  
 He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away  
 The Albatross's blood.

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## PART VII.

The Hermit of  
 the wood.

This Hermit good lives in that wood  
 Which slopes down to the sea. 515  
 How loudly his sweet voice he rears!  
 He loves to talk with marineres  
 That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve —  
 He hath a cushion plump : 520  
 It is the moss that wholly hides  
 The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,  
 'Why, this is strange, I trow!  
 Where are those lights so many and fair, 525  
 That signal made but now?'

Approacheth the  
 ship with won-  
 der.

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said —  
 'And they answered not our cheer!  
 The planks looked warped! and see those  
 sails,  
 How thin they are and sere! 530  
 I never saw aught like to them,  
 Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag  
 My forest-brook along ;  
 When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow, 535  
 And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,  
 That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look —  
 (The Pilot made reply),  
 I am afeared.' — 'Push on, push on !' 540  
 Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,  
 But I nor spake nor stirred ;  
 The boat came close beneath the ship,  
 And straight a sound was heard. 545

Under the water it rumbled on,  
 Still louder and more dread :  
 It reached the ship, it split the bay ;  
 The ship went down like lead. The ship suddenly sinketh.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound, 550  
 Which sky and ocean smote,  
 Like one that hath been seven days drowned  
 My body lay afloat ;  
 But swift as dreams, myself I found  
 Within the Pilot's boat. 555

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,  
 The boat spun round and round ;  
 And all was still, save that the hill  
 Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips — the Pilot shrieked 560  
 And fell down in a fit ;  
 The holy Hermit raised his eyes,  
 And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,  
 Who now doth crazy go, 565  
 Laughed loud and long, and all the while  
 His eyes went to and fro.  
 'Ha, ha !' quoth he, ' full plain I see,  
 The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree, 570  
 I stood on the firm land !  
 The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,  
 And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him. ' O, shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man !'  
 The Hermit crossed his brow. 575  
 ' Say quick,' quoth he, ' I bid thee say —  
 What manner of man art thou ?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched  
 With a woful agony,  
 Which forced me to begin my tale ; 580  
 And then it left me free.

And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land. Since then, at an uncertain hour,  
 That agony returns ;  
 And till my ghastly tale is told,  
 This heart within me burns. 585

I pass, like night, from land to land ;  
 I have strange power of speech ;  
 That moment that his face I see,  
 I know the man that must hear me :  
 To him my tale I teach. 590

What loud uproar bursts from that door !  
 The Wedding-Guests are there :  
 But in the garden-bower the bride  
 And bride-maids singing are :  
 And hark the little vesper bell, 595  
 Which biddeth me to prayer !

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been  
 Alone on a wide wide sea :  
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself  
 Scarce seemèd there to be. 600

O, sweeter than the marriage-feast,  
 'Tis sweeter far to me,  
 To walk together to the kirk  
 With a goodly company ! —

To walk together to the kirk, 605  
 And all together pray,  
 While each to his great Father bends,  
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends,  
 And youths and maidens gay !

Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell  
 To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !  
 He prayeth well, who loveth well  
 Both man and bird and beast.

610 And to teach by  
 his own example  
 love and rever-  
 ence to all things  
 that God made  
 and loveth. .

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small ; 615  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,  
Whose beard with age is hoar,  
Is gone : and now the Wedding-Guest 620  
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,  
And is of sense forlorn :  
A sadder and a wiser man,  
He rose the morrow morn. 625

## CHRONOLOGICAL.

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1772. Born at Ottery St. Mary, Oct. 21.  
1782. Admitted to Christ's Hospital.  
1791. Enters Cambridge University.  
1793. Enlists in the Light Dragoons.  
1794. Returns to Cambridge; meets Southey at Oxford; Pantisocracy hatched; leaves Cambridge and goes to London.  
1795. Goes to Bristol; marries Miss Fricker, and settles at Clevedon.  
1796. First volume of poems; *The Watchman*.  
1797. Removes to Nether Stowey; first meeting with Wordsworth; the *Lyrical Ballads* begun.  
1798. *Lyrical Ballads* published; visits Germany with the Wordsworths.  
1799. Returns to England; *Morning Post* and *Wallenstein*.  
1800. Removes to Greta Hall, Keswick.  
1801. Broken health; the "Kendal Black Drop."  
1802. Dejection and family discord.  
1803. Visits Scotland with the Wordsworths.  
1804. Sails for Malta; made secretary to Sir Alexander Ball.  
1805. Visits Sicily and Rome.  
1806-10. At Coleorton with Wordsworth; lectures on the poets at the Royal Institution, London; at Grasmere; projects the *Friend*.  
1811-12. In London; lectures on Shakespeare and Milton.  
1813-16. *Remorse* at Drury Lane; lectures at Bristol; goes to Calne; settles at Highgate with the Gillmans; publishes *Christabel*.

1817. *Biographia Literaria* and *Sibylline Leaves*.  
1818. Lectures in London; meets Thomas Allsop and Keats.  
1818. Failure of publishers.  
1820-22. Hackwork.  
1825. *Aids to Reflection*; Pension.  
1825-34. Last years at Highgate.

## NOTES.

### TRANSLATION OF THE MOTTO FROM BURNET.

I readily believe that there are more invisible beings in the universe than visible. But who will explain to us the nature of all these, the rank, relationships, distinguishing characteristics and functions of each? What is it they do? Where is it they dwell? Always human thought circles around the knowledge of these mysteries, never touching the centre. Meanwhile it is, I confess, oft-times well pleasing to behold sketched upon the mind, as upon a tablet, a picture of the greater and better world; so shall the spirit, wonted to the petty concerns of daily life, not narrow itself overmuch, nor sink utterly into trivialities. But meanwhile we must diligently seek for truth, and maintain a temperate judgment, if we would distinguish certainty from uncertainty, day from night.

T. BURNET: *Archæol. Phil.*, p. 68.

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The *Ancient Mariner* was first printed anonymously in the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, with the title: *The Rime of the Ancient Marinere in Seven Parts*. An Advertisement, which was the germ of Wordsworth's famous *Prefaces*, and an Argument, introduced the poem. In the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), the title was changed to *The Ancient Mariner, a Poet's Reverie*. The Argument was altered, the text was much changed, and the extreme archaisms in spelling disappeared. The text was reprinted in *Lyrical Ballads*, 1802 and 1805, but the Argument was omitted. It next appeared in *Sibylline Leaves* (1817), with the Motto from Burnet, a few changes of text, the element of the horrible made less prominent, the marginal gloss added, and the Argument of 1798 restored.

Mr. Walter Pater says that the quaint prose commentary which runs side by side with the verse, illustrates that the flower of mediæval romance grew in an atmosphere of psychological speculation.



Shelley once said that poets, like chameleons, take the color of the plants on which they feed. What food nourished the Coleridge of the *Ancient Mariner* is found in many of his early poems.

"Not a hidden path, that to the shades  
Of the beloved Parnassian forest lea,  
Lurked undiscovered by him; not a rill  
There issues from the fount of Hippocrene,  
But he had traced it upward to its source,  
Through open glade, dark glen, and secret dell,  
Knew the gay wild flowers on its banks, and culled  
Its med'cinable herbs. Yea, oft alone,  
Piercing the long-neglected holy cave,  
The haunt obscure of old Philosophy,  
He bade with lifted torch its starry walls  
Sparkle, as erst they sparkled to the flame  
Of odorous lamps tended by Saint and Sage.  
O framed for calmer times, and nobler hearts!  
O studious Poet, eloquent for truth!  
Philosopher! contemning wealth and death,  
Yet docile, childlike, full of Life and Love."

*A Tombless Epitaph.*

"I had found  
That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive  
Their finer influence from the world within;  
Fair ciphers of vague import, where the eye  
Traces no spot, in which the heart may read  
History and prophecy."

*Lines written in the Hartz Forest.*

In *Phantom or Fact*, we have the following question, which so many ask of the *Ancient Mariner*, and its answer.

FRIEND.

"This riddling tale, to what does it belong?  
Is't history? Vision? Or an idle song?  
Or rather say at once, within what space  
Of time this wild disastrous change took place?"

## AUTHOR.

Call it a *moment's* work (and such it seems)  
 This tale's a fragment from the life of dreams;  
 But say, that years matur'd the silent strife,  
 And 'tis a record from the dream of life."

In *Time, Real and Imaginary*, is found that distinction which lay at the foundation of his famous definition of Science and Poetry.

"Two lovely children run an endless race,  
 A sister and a brother!  
 This far outstript the other;  
 Yet ever runs she with reverted face,  
 And looks and listens for the boy behind:  
 For he, alas! is blind!  
 O'er rough and smooth with even step he passed,  
 And knows not whether he be first or last."

The *Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel* are charged with the spirit of the old romance, which returned to England in the ballad literature of Percy's *Reliques*, Macpherson's *Ossian* and the imaginative medievalism of Chatterton.

"Young eyed poesy  
 All deftly masked as hoar antiquity."

"Inspiration's eager hour  
 When most the big soul feels the maddening power."

"In Coleridge personally," says Walter Pater, "this taste had been encouraged by his odd and out-of-the-way reading in the old-fashioned literature of the marvellous—books like Purchas's *Pilgrims*, early voyages like Hakluyt's, old naturalists and visionary moralists, like Thomas Burnet, from whom he quotes the motto of the *Ancient Mariner*. Fancies of the strange things which may very well happen, even in broad daylight, to men shut up alone in ships far off on the sea, seem to have occurred to the human mind in all ages with a peculiar readiness."

Mr. Dykes Campbell says that besides the indebtedness to a

dream of their Stowey friend Cruikshank, the passage in Shelvocke, and the handling of the ship by the spirits, Mr. J. F. Nicholls, City Librarian of Bristol, has suggested a very probable hint from Captain Thomas James's *Strange and Dangerous Voyage . . . in his Intended Discovery of the North-West Passage into the South Sea*. London, 1633. Mr. Nicholls says: "It is very likely indeed that S. T. Coleridge, who was a regular frequenter of our City Library, devised his marrow-chilling scenes depicted in that unique and immortal poem, *The Ancient Mariner*, from Captain James's *Strange and Dangerous Voyage*." Mr. Ivor James, in an article *The Source of the Ancient Mariner* (*Athenæum*, 1890), makes much of this theory.

Still, again, it has been suggested that the idea may have been stimulated by "The Letter of Saint Paulinus to Macarius, in which he relates astounding wonders concerning the shipwreck of an old man." This document is to be found in La Bigne's *Magna Bibliotheca Veterum Patrum*, 1618. In this story the old man is the sole survivor of the ship's crew; the ship was navigated by a 'Crew of Angels,' 'steered by the Pilot of the World to the Lucanian Shore.'

While it is not impossible that Coleridge derived some hints from the above, yet I fancy he would say to all this wool gathering as did Tennyson to such: "There is, I fear, a prosaic set growing up among us—editors of booklets, book-worms, index-hunters, or men of great memories and no imagination—who *impute themselves* to the poet, and so believe that he, too, has no imagination, but is forever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate."

The natural analogy to this influence of early associations upon Coleridge is to be found in the life of Scott. Scott was born in literary Edinburgh, but on account of physical infirmity he was early taken to the farm of his paternal grandfather at Sandyknowe, on the slopes of Smailholm crags. At the summit of the crags stood the grim old sentinel, Smailholm tower, guarding the Borderland, where "every field has its battle and every rivulet its song." Not far away was the venerable Abbey of Dryburgh, the Eildons, and the stretches of Lammermoor, Melrose, "like some tall rock with lichens gay," almost encircled by the Tweed; while the vales

of Ettrick and Yarrow, fragrant with song and ballad, could be seen in the distance.

"And rising from those lofty groves,  
Behold a Ruin hoary!  
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,  
Renowned in Border story."

Such were the sights that fed the wandering eyes of Scott's infancy and boyhood, while his ear was trained to ballad, song, and story by the grandmother and her auld gudeman. His aunt fired his imagination by the tales of Jamie Telfer, Wat of Harden, wight Willie, and by the old ballads. "Hardiknute," says Scott, "was the first poem I ever learnt, and the last I shall ever forget."

"Between these and the soul of Scott," says Shairp, "there was a pre-established harmony." As a result of the atmosphere which surrounded his childhood, when he reached boyhood he read everything he could find, but of all the formative influences, that of the volume of Percy's *Reliques* was the most significant. It was such forces that moved him to edit the *Border Minstrelsy*, a volume which divides the honors with Percy's *Reliques*. When he was casting about for material for the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, he met one who acquainted him with the work of the Lake School of poets, and he says, "Especially Coleridge's beautiful and tantalizing fragments of Christabel (then in MS.), which, from the irregularity of the stanzas, and the liberty which it allowed the author to adapt the sound to the sense, seemed to be exactly suited to such an extravaganza as I meditated, and it is to Mr. Coleridge that I am bound to make the acknowledgment due from the pupil to his master."

## PART I.

If we compare other sea poetry with this poem, we naturally turn to the grand old ballad of *Sir Patrick Spens*, Tennyson's *The Revenge*, *The Sailor Boy*, and Longfellow's *Wreck of the Hesperus*.

"The King sits in Dunfermline town  
Drinking the blude-red wine;

D

"O whare will I get a skeely skipper  
To sail this new ship o' mine?"

*Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens.*

"And the sun went down and the stars  
came out far over the summer sea,  
But never a moment ceased the fight of  
the one and the fifty-three."

*The Revenge.*

"God help me! Save I take my part  
Of danger on the roaring sea,  
A devil rises in my heart,  
Far worse than any death to me."

*The Sailor Boy.*

"It was the schooner Hesperus,  
That sailed the wintry sea;  
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,  
To bear him company."

*Wreck of the Hesperus.*

The *Ancient Mariner* is in direct line with that remarkable strain of the sea in English poetry, which extends from the *Wanderer* to Kipling's *Seven Seas*.

Coleridge says of his early home:

"Low was our pretty Cot: our tallest rose  
Peeped at the chamber-window. We could hear  
At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,  
The sea's faint murmur."

*A Quiet Place.*

13. He holds him with his glittering eye. Coleridge was remarkable for his power to attract listeners to his marvellous conversation. At Christ's Hospital and at Cambridge his large grey eye sparkled with a noble madness which held his comrades as if by magic. Of his later power in the same direction, Carlyle says: "He distinguished himself to all that ever heard him as at least the most surprising talker extant in this world. His thoughts did not seem to come with labour and effort, but as if borne on the gusts

of genius, and as if the wings of his imagination lifted him from his feet." Mr. Swinburne has called him "The footless bird of Paradise."

Mr. Nelson Coleridge thus speaks of his uncle's conversation: "To pass an entire day with Coleridge was a marvellous change indeed (from the talk of daily life). It was a Sabbath past expression, deep and tranquil and severe; so playful was his manner, so simple his language, so affectionate the glance of his eye."

Wordsworth alludes to him as

"The rapt one of the godlike forehead,  
The heaven-eyed creature."

"Let the dullest clod that ever vegetated," says Christopher North, "be shut up in a room with Coleridge, or in a wood, and subjected for a few minutes to the ethereal influence of that wonderful man's monologue, and he will begin to believe himself a poet. . . . While he is discoursing, the world loses all its commonplaces, and you and your wife imagine yourself Adam and Eve listening to the affable Archangel, Raphael, in the Garden of Eden."

In *My First Acquaintance with the Poets*, Hazlitt alludes to a visit of Coleridge to his father's house in 1798. He says: "When the poet preacher took leave I accompanied him six miles on the road. It was a fine morning in the middle of winter and he talked the whole way. The scholar in Chaucer is described as going

' — Sounding on his way.'

So Coleridge went on his. In digressing, in dilating, in passing from subject to subject, he appeared to me to float in air, to slide on ice. . . . On my way back I had a sound in my ears—it was the voice of Fancy; I had a light before me—it was the face of Poetry." This stanza was contributed by Wordsworth.

25-28. *The sun came up*, etc. What is the effect of the monosyllabic words here?

41-44. *And now the Storm-blast came*, etc. Mr. Dykes Campbell has changed the gloss here from *drawn*, as most editions give it, to *driven*. The Storm-blast *chased* the ship along, and hence *driven* seemed the natural word to use here.

51-70. And now there came, etc. Mr. Dykes Campbell gives the following data from the log of Captain James's "Northwest passage." The reader may judge as to the probability that Coleridge had read them.

'All day and all night it snowed hard;' 'The nights are very cold; so that our rigging freezes;' 'It proved very thick fowle weather, and the next day we found ourselves encompassed about with ice;' 'We had ice not farre off about us, and some pieces as high as our Top-mast-head;' 'We heard the rutt against a bank of ice that lay on the shoare. It made a hollow and hideous noise;' 'The ice cracked all over the Bay with a fearfull noyse.'

Mr. Traill says: "The details of the voyage are all chronicled with such order and regularity, there is such a diary-like air about the whole thing, that we accept it almost as if it were a series of extracts from a ship's log."

63. This incident was suggested by Wordsworth.

79-82. God save thee, etc. In *The Raven*, written in early youth, we find indications of what the man was to be, for the moral is the same as that of the *Ancient Mariner*, — almost a Greek idea of Nemesis. A woodman had cut down an oak in which was a raven's nest; had made a vessel of it, and when it was launched he

"Heard the last shriek of the perishing souls —  
See! see! o'er the topmast the mad water rolls!  
Right glad was the Raven, and off he went fleet,  
And Death riding home on a cloud he did meet,  
And he thank'd him again and again for this treat:  
They had taken his all, and REVENGE WAS SWEET."

## PART II.

97, 98. Nor dim nor red, etc. Professor Dowden says of these two lines: "The sunrise at sea is like the solemn apposition of one of the chief actors in the drama of crime, and agony, and expiation, and in the new sense of wonder with which we witness that oldest spectacle of the heavens we can well believe in other miracles."

104. The furrow followed free. In *Sibylline Leaves* (1817) the line was printed —

“The furrow stream’d off free,”

And Coleridge added this footnote, “In the former editions the line was —

‘The furrow follow’d free,’

but I had not been long on board the ship before I perceived that this was the image as seen by a spectator from the shore or from another vessel. From the ship itself the *wake* appears like a brook flowing off from the stern.” In the edition of 1828 and later ones the earlier reading was restored. — J. Dykes Campbell.

119-122. Water, water, everywhere, etc. Alonzo, conscience-stricken for his crime, says:

“Methought the bellows spoke and told me of it;  
The winds did sing it to me, and the thunder,  
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounced  
The name of Prosper: it did bass my trespass,  
Therefore my son in the ooze is bedded, and  
I’ll seek him deeper than e’er plummet sounded,  
And with him there lie mudded.”

*Tempest*, Act iii. Sc. 3.

127-130. About, about, etc. A touch of Middleton and Shakespeare here.

“Black spirits and white;  
Red spirits and gray;  
Mingle, mingle, mingle,  
You that mingle may.”

THOMAS MIDDLETON, *The Witch*.

“Fair is foul and foul is fair:  
Hover through the fog and filthy air.”

*Macbeth*, Act i. Sc. 1.

141. Instead of the cross, etc. As a study of the idea of Nemesis, or Retribution, this should be compared with the *Libation Pourers* of Aeschylus, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*.



## PART III.

149-156. At first it seemed, etc. "Coleridge was accustomed to wander of evenings on the shore to the north of Stowey, and watch a vessel emerging to sight on the open sea, — first a little spot between himself and the setting sun; then a dark little cloud; then a shadowy form, mast and yards, black as iron cross-bars." — ALOIS BRÄNDL.

These stanzas illustrate what Mr. Traill says: "Coleridge's eye seems never to wander from his object, and again and again the scene starts out upon the canvas in two or three strokes of the brush."

164. they for joy did grin. "I took the thought of *grinning for joy* from my companion's (Berdmore of Jesus Coll., Cambridge) remark to me when we had climbed to the top of Plinlimmon, and were fairly dead with thirst. We could not speak from the constriction till we found a little puddle under a stone. He said to me, 'You grinned like an idiot!' He had done the same." — *Table Talk*, May 31, 1830.

184. Gossameres. The fine film network to be seen in the air on summer evenings. The old legend says these are the remnants of the Virgin Mary's winding sheet, which fell from her when she was translated.

185-189. Are those her ribs, etc. A MS. correction by Coleridge of the corresponding stanza in edition of 1798 was, —

"Are those *her* ribs which fleck'd the sun  
Like bars of a dungeon grate?  
Are those two all, all of the crew,  
That woman and her mate?"

"The following stanza was found in Coleridge's handwriting on the margin of a copy of the Bristol (1798) edition of *Lyrical Ballads*." — DYKES CAMPBELL.

"This ship it was a plankless thing,  
A bare Anatomy!  
A plankless Spectre, and it mov'd  
Like a being of the Sea!

The woman and a fleshless man  
Therein sate merrily."

Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ii. 666-671 :

"The other shape —  
If shape it might be called that shape had none  
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb :  
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,  
For each seemed either — black it stood as Night,  
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell."

"The two palpable intruders from a spiritual world in almost all ghost literature — in Scott and Shakespeare even — have a kind of crudity or coarseness. Coleridge's power is in the very fineness with which, as by some really ghostly finger, he brings home to our inmost sense his inventions, daring as they are." — WALTER PATER.

193, 194. *The Night-mare*, etc.

"The exterminating fiend is fled  
(Foul her life and dark her doom) :  
Mighty armies of the dead  
Dance like death-fires round her tomb !"  
*Ode on the Departing Year.*

In his *Epitaph* which he composed in 1833, there is striking allusion to ~~these~~ lines :

"O lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C.,  
That he who many a year with toil of breath  
Finds death in life, may here find life in death !"

"The Night-mare Life-in-Death, she it was who, with her numbing spell, haunted Coleridge himself in after days." — DOWDEN.  
197, 198. *The game is done*, etc.

"The weird sisters, hand in hand,  
Posters of the sea and land,  
Thus do go about, about :  
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,



Of azure without cloud, and at my feet  
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist."

*Prelude*, xiv. 38-42.

"For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!  
And overspread with phantom light,  
With swimming phantom light o'erspread,  
But rimm'd and circled by a silver thread."

*Dejection, an Ode.*

"It is in a highly sensitive apprehension of the aspects of external nature that Coleridge identifies himself most closely with one of the main tendencies of the 'Lake School'; a tendency instinctive, and no mere matter of theory, in him as in Wordsworth."

WALTER PATER.

Nature is used by the poets in a great variety of ways, the earliest of which is perhaps that childlike delight in all things out-of-doors, as seen in Chaucer's "Prologue," *The Legend of Good Women*.

"When comen is the May,  
There in my bed there daweth me no day  
That I n'am up and walking in the mead,  
To see this flower against the sunné spread,  
When it upriseth early in the morrow;  
That blissful sight softeneth all my sorrow.  
And down on knees anon right I me set,  
And as I could this fresshé flow'r I grette,  
Kneeling always till it unclosed was  
Upon the smalé, softé, sweeté gras."

Nature is used by many poets merely as a background. Virgil's description of the harbor where the fleet of Æneas found shelter is a good illustration of this:

"The spot, an inlet deep. An island there  
With outstretched arms makes port, where every wave  
From seaward breaks and faints in gentle ebb."

*Æneid*, Book I.

Homer, in *Odyssey*, gives a similar description of the course of Ulysses after escaping from the Sirens :

"There is a pile  
Of beetling rocks where roars the mighty surge  
Of dark-eyed Amphitrite."

Again, nature may be selected because of some event associated with the place. This use is seen in Scott and in the old ballads.

"Ettricke Foreste is a feir foreste,  
In it grows manic a semelie tree;  
There's hart and hynd, and dae and rae,  
And of a' wild beatis grete plentie."

Poets have often gone to nature when greatly depressed, or when in a mood of joyousness, and have found her in sympathy with them. This treatment of nature is common in Tennyson. In his great works he never merely describes nature, nor does he ever reveal a life in nature ; but he makes nature and man reflect each other's moods.

*Break, break, break* gives us one mood, and *Crossing the Bar* another; but in all Tennyson's long poems both moods are present, especially in *The Two Voices*, *The Princess*, and *In Memoriam*.

Still again nature may be regarded by itself, apart from man, as the subject for a picture. This use of nature is comparatively recent; it dates from the time of Thomson and Allan Ramsay, and is one of the delightful elements of poetry since that time. Cf. Shelley, *Mont Blanc* :

"Ravine of Arve — dark, deep Ravine —  
Thou many-colored, many voiced vale,  
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail  
Fast cloud shadows and sunbeams; awful scene,  
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down  
From the ice gulphs that gird his secret throne."

This may be called the poetry of "natural magic," but a higher type still is what Mr. Arnold calls the type of "moral profundity." "Poetry interprets in two ways," he says; "it interprets by express-

ing with magical felicity the physiognomy and movement of the outward world, and it interprets by expressing with inspired conviction the ideas and laws of the inward world of man's moral and spiritual nature." Nature to many poets has been but the visible garment of God. In this realm Wordsworth is the High Priest. Wordsworth's Apocalypse is clearest in parts of the *Prelude*, and the *Excursion*; but his greatest revelation in any single poem is in *Tintern Abbey*:

"I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things."

222, 223. And every soul, etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, Act. iii. Sc. 1.:

*King*. "How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!"

*Macbeth*, Act ii. Sc. 1.:

*Macb*. "How is't with me, when every noise appals me?"

#### PART IV.

224-227. I fear thee, etc. Cf. *Macbeth*, Act i. Sc. 3, 18-25:

"I will drain him dry as hay," etc.

"For the last two lines of this stanza I am indebted to Mr Wordsworth."

Note of S. T. C. — *Sibylline Leaves*.

"And still beside the Nine-stane burn,  
Ribb'd like the sand at mark of sea."

*Lord Soulis* by JOHN LEYDEN.

232-235. *Alone, alone*, etc. The terror of this scene is equal to that of *Macbeth*, Act v. Sc. 1, the Sleepwalking Scene; and *Hamlet*, Act iii. Sc. 3, where the King is at prayer. Cf. Tennyson, *The Palace of Art* :

"She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within.  
There comes no murmur of reply.  
What is it that will take away my sin,  
And save me lest I die?'"

Hazlitt, alluding to the first time he heard Coleridge preach, in 1798, says: "When I got there the organ was playing the 100th Psalm, and when it was done Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text, 'And he went up into the mountain to pray, HIMSELF ALONE.' As he gave out the text his voice 'rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes,' and when he came to the last two words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe."

244, 245. *I looked to Heaven*, etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, Act iii. Sc. 3:

"Pray can I not,  
Though inclination be as sharp as sharp as will :  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent."

248-256. *I closed my lids*, etc. Cf. Tennyson, *Palace of Art* :

"But in dark corners of her palace stood  
Uncertain shapes!" etc.

257, 258. *An orphan's curse*, etc. Cf. Æschylos, *Choephora*s Ant. i.

"Full clear a spectre came  
That made each single hair to stand on end," etc.

*Macbeth*, Act iv. Sc. 1 :

*Macb.* "What is this,  
That rises like the issue of a King  
And wears upon his baby-brow the round  
And top of Sovereignty?"

259, 260. But oh! more horrible, etc. Cf. *Macbeth*, Act. iii. Sc. 4.

263-266. The moving Moon, etc. For equally clear observation of Nature, cf. *Christabel*, Part the First:

"There is not wind enough to twirl  
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,  
That dances as often as dance it can,  
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,  
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky."

Read the gloss here carefully for additional illustration of imaginative power.

267, 268. Her beams bemocked, etc. Cf. *Frost at Midnight*:

"So shalt thou see and hear  
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible  
Of that eternal language, which thy God  
Utters. . . . .  
'Whether the eave-drops fall  
Heard only in the trances of the blast,  
Or if the secret ministry of frost  
Shall hang them up in silent icicles  
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon?'"

274-276. They moved, etc. Coleridge has the eye of a scientist here. Cf. *Christabel*, Part the Second:

"A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,  
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,  
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye."

"In these monsters he seems to have particular interest, and to have consulted various zoölogical works; for the note book of this date contains long paragraphs upon the alligators, boas, and crocodiles of antediluvian times." — ALOIS BRANDL.

Cf. Scott's *Lord of the Isles*, Canto i. Stanza xxi.:

"Awaked before the rushing prow,  
The mimic fires of ocean glow,  
Those lightnings of the wave;



Wild sparkles crest the broken tides,  
And, flashing, round the vessel's sides  
With elvish lustre lave."

279-287. **Blue, glossy green**, etc. "Coleridge's strange creatures of the sea are not the hideous worms which a vulgar dealer in the supernatural might have invented. Seen in a great calm by the light of the moon, these creatures of God are beautiful in the joy of their life." — DOWDEN.

Cf. *Lewti* for an allusion in contrast to this:

"The river swans have heard my tread  
And startle from their reedy bed.  
O beauteous Birds! methinks ye measure  
Your movements to some heavenly tune!  
O beauteous Birds! 'tis such a pleasure  
To see you move beneath the moon."

This idea of God in Nature is the master vision of Wordsworth. Cf. *Lines Written in Early Spring*, a poem composed the same year as the *Ancient Mariner*:

"The birds around me hopped and played,  
Their thoughts I cannot measure;  
But the least motion which they made,  
It seemed a thrill of pleasure."

288-291. **The self-same moment**, etc. Here is the dramatic centre of the story, as in Shakespeare's five-act plays it is in the third act.

"From the soul itself must issue forth  
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud  
Enveloping the Earth.  
And from the soul itself must there be sent  
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,  
Of all sweet sounds the life and element."

*Ode to Dejection.*

## PART V.

292-296. **O Sleep!** etc. Cf. *Ode to Dejection*.

"Visit her, gentle Sleep, with wings of healing."

Wordsworth, in *To Sleep*, gives us something the same impressions as does Coleridge in *The Pains of Sleep*.

"Without thee what is all the morning's wealth?  
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,  
Dear Mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health."

WORDSWORTH.

"Sleep, the wide blessing, seemed to me  
Distemper's worst calamity."

COLERIDGE.

"Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care;  
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,  
Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,  
Chief nourisher in life's feast."

*Macbeth*, Act. ii. Sc. 2.

305-308. **I moved**, etc. "Certainly there are strange things in the other world, and so there are in all the steps to it; and a little glimpse of Heaven, — a moment's conversing with an angel, — any ray of God, any communication from the Spirit of Comfort, which God gives to his servants in strange and unknown manners, are infinitely far from illusions. We shall understand them when we feel them, and when, in new and strange needs, we shall be refreshed by them" (Note-book, p. 27). Cf. *In Memoriam*, xciv., xcv.

318-326. **And the coming wind**, etc. The minute realism of description here reveals Coleridge's sensitive apprehension of natural scenery.

"The thin grey cloud is spread on high,  
It covers but not hides the sky.  
The moon is behind and at the full;  
And yet she looks both small and dull."

*Christabel*.

359. I heard the skylark sing. The nightingale and the skylark are the birds beloved by poets.

"O'er stiller place,  
No singing skylark ever poised himself."

*Fears in Solitude.*

"Oft with patient ear  
Long-listening to the viewless skylark's note  
(Viewless or haply for a moment seen  
Gleaming on sunny wings)."

*A Quiet Place.*

"Happy, happy Liver,  
With a soul as strong as a mountain river,  
Pouring out praise to the Almighty giver."

WORDSWORTH, *To a Skylark.*

"Teach me half the gladness  
That thy brain must know,  
Such harmonious madness  
From my lips would flow,  
The world should listen then, as I am listening now."

SHELLEY, *To a Skylark.*

361-372. How they seemed to fill, etc. We have here what Wordsworth alluded to when writing of his sailor brother: —

"But thou, a school boy, to the sea hadst carried  
Undying recollections; nature there  
Was with thee."

"How joyed my heart in the rich melodies  
That overhead and round me did arise!  
The moving leaves — the water's gentle flow —  
Delicious music hung on every bough."

IZAACK WALTON.

"Coleridge sang often as the winds go, and the clouds sail, and when he sang thus he was at one with the life of nature, and not with the life of man. Whenever he rises into this exquisite melody in its perfection, he also rises into that subtilised imaginative world

of thought, half supernatural, half natural, which was special to him."

STOFFORD BROOKE.

"For absolute melody and splendour it were hardly rash to call this the first poem in the language. An exquisite instinct married to a subtle science of verse make it the supreme model of music."

A. C. SWINBURNE.

The last stanza suggests the special revelation of nature which it was the mission of Wordsworth and Coleridge to give. Cf. Wordsworth, *It was an April Morning, The Leechgatherer, Lines in Early Spring*.

"To feel, altho' no tongue can prove  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veil'eth love, itself is love.  
The woods were fill'd so full with song,  
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong."

TENNYSON, *The Two Voices*.

"O! the one life within us and abroad,  
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,  
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,  
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere —  
Methinks, it should have been impossible  
Not to love all things in a world so filled."

*The Æolian Harp.*

Coleridge often upbraids those poets who project themselves into nature.

"And many a poet echoes the conceit;  
Poet who hath been building up the rhyme  
When he had better far have stretched his limbs  
Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,  
By sun or moonlight, to the influxes  
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements  
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song  
And of his fame forgetful! so his fame  
Should share in Nature's immortality,

A venerable thing! and so his song.  
Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself  
Be loved like Nature."

*The Nightingale.*

363-366. And now 'twas like, etc.

"When on some gilded cloud or flower  
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,  
And in those weaker glories spy  
Some shadows of eternity;  
And feel through all this fleshly dress  
Bright shoots of everlastingness."

VAUGHAN.

402-405. The spirit, etc.

"But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee;  
And the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee;  
Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee;  
And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee;  
Who knoweth not in all these  
That the hand of the Lord hath wrought this."

*JOB, First Cycle of Speeches.*

The years 1785 and 1786 are memorable in the history of English poetry, for they mark the first culmination of that movement toward Nature which began in England with Gray and Goldsmith, and in Scotland with Ramsay and Thomson.

In 1785 Cowper published *The Task*, and in 1786 Burns gave to the world the first edition of his poems.

Cowper loved to tend the hare which he had saved from the hunter —

"One sheltered hare  
Has never heard the sanguinary yell  
Of cruel man exulting in her woes.  
.  
.  
.  
.  
.

Yes — thou may'st eat thy bread, and lick the hand  
That feeds thee; thou may'st frolic on the floor  
At evening, and at night retire secure  
To thy straw couch, and slumber unalarmed."

In the winter night, when doors and winnocks rattle, Burns thought —

“On the ourie cattle  
Or silly sheep wha bide the brattle  
O’ winter war,  
And thro’ the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle  
Beneath a *seaur*.”

By teaching that God’s love was revealed in nature, in animal life; that

“God made all the creatures, and gave them our love and our fear,  
To give sign we and they are his children, one family here,”

they made poetry reflect, as never before, the religion of Christ.

## PART VI.

442-445. And now this spell was snapt, etc. Coleridge, in the sixth stanza of *Dejection*, says:

“There was a time when, though my path was rough,  
This joy within me dallied with distress,  
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff  
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness.”

446-451. Like one, that on a lonesome road, etc. This stanza introduces us into the realm of the supernatural much as does Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. It takes us to the primeval imagination as it created the spirits of good and evil which wait on man to reward or to punish. Mr. Stopford Brooke says: “I never met a sailor whose ship had been among the lonely places of the sea who did not know of these hauntings.”

For the expression of similar feelings on land read *Christabel*.

In these days of utilitarianism, when we are taught that it is more important to know the law of the suction pump than to know Hamlet, it is well to get back to the great principle which underlies such art as the *Ancient Mariner*, *Macbeth*, *Paradise Lost*, *The Divine Comedy*, *Faust*, *The Prometheus of Æschylos*, and the book of Job.

467. Is this mine own countree?

Cf. *Fears in Solitude*.

472-479. The harbor-bay, etc. As in Coleridge, the quiet of the harbor is the symbol of return to the life of love after the storms of sin; so in Longfellow —

"I stood on the bridge at midnight,  
As the clocks were striking the hour,  
And the moon rose o'er the city,  
Behind the dark church-tower.

"I saw her bright reflection  
In the waters under me,  
Like a golden goblet falling  
And sinking into the sea.

"And forever and forever,  
As long as the river flows,  
As long as the heart has passions,  
As long as life has woes,

"The moon and its broken reflection  
And its shadows shall appear,  
As the symbol of love in heaven,  
And its wavering image here."

*The Bridge.*

"How pleasantly, how reassuringly, the whole night-mare story is made to end among the clear, fresh sounds and lights of the bay where it began." — WALTER PATER.

490, etc. A man all light, etc. The idea of working the ship by this means was suggested by Wordsworth.

500-504. But soon I heard, etc. Mr. Dykes Campbell says that in a copy of the edition of 1798 Coleridge crossed out the stanza which followed this, and wrote in the margin the following:

"Then vanish'd all the lovely sights,  
The spirits of the air;  
No souls of mortal men were they,  
But spirits bright and fair."

510, 511. He singeth, etc.

"He murmurs near the running brook  
A music sweeter than their own."

WORDSWORTH, *Poet's Epitaph*.

514-518. This Hermit, etc.

Cf. *Christabel*, Part II.

523-530. The skiff-boat neared, etc.

Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI. The old ferryman, Charon.

535. Ivy-tod: ivy-bush or clump.

"The wealthy miller's mealy face  
Like the moon in an ivy-tod."

TENNYSON, *The Miller's Daughter*, 1833.

## PART VII.

536, 537. And the owlet whoops, etc.

"By tairn and rill,  
The night-birds all that hour were still.  
But now they are jubilant anew,  
From cliff and tower, tu-whoo! tu-whoo!  
Tu-whoo! tu-whoo! from wood and fell."

*Christabel*.

560-569. I moved my lips, etc. How marvellously, and as it were by a single stroke, does Coleridge create for us the physical effects of the mariner's long agony, when he makes the sight of him so startling and tragic.

578-581. Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched.

"Remorse is as the heart in which it grows;  
If that be gentle, it drops balmy dews  
Of true repentance; but if proud and gloomy  
It is a poison-tree, that pierced to the inmost,  
Weeps only tears of poison."

*Remorse*, Act i. Sc. 1.

584, 585. And, till my ghastly tale is told, etc. Cf. Wordsworth:



"A timely utterance gave that thought relief —  
And I again am strong."

586-590. I pass, like night, etc. In *Stanzas written in my Pocket-copy of Thomson's Castle of Indolence*, Wordsworth gives an interesting picture of Coleridge:

"On his own time here would he float away,  
As doth a fly upon a summer brook;  
But go to-morrow, or belike to-day,  
Seek for him, — he is fled; and whither none can say.

Full many a time upon a stormy night,  
His voice came to us from the neighboring height.  
Oft could we see him driving full in view  
At mid-day when the sun was shining bright;  
What ill was on him, what he had to do,  
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew."

"But though my slumber was gone by,  
This dream it would not pass away —  
It seems to live upon my eye!  
And hence I vowed this self-same day  
With music strong and saintly song  
To wander through the forest bare,  
Lest aught unholy loiter there."

*Christabel.*

601-609. O, sweeter than the marriage-feast, etc. Cf. Tennyson's *The Two Voices*, 549-624.

614-618. He prayeth best, etc.

"There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,  
Omnific. His most holy name is Love.  
Truth of subliming import! with the which  
Who feeds and saturates his constant soul  
He from his small particular orbit flies  
With blest outstarting! from himself he flies,  
Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze

Views all creation ; and he loves it all.  
And blesses it, and calls it very good !”

*Religious Musings.*

“Innocent foal ! thou poor, despised, forlorn,  
I hail thee brother, spite of the fool's scorn.”

*To a Young Ass.*

Cf. Wordsworth :

“The Being, that is in the clouds and air,  
That is in the green leaves among the groves,  
Maintains a deep and reverential care  
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

“One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,  
Taught by what she shows, and what conceals ;  
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride  
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.”

*Hart-Leap Well.*

Valentine Le Grice, one of Coleridge's Cambridge friends, expressed in his commemoration speech the creed of the young poets. “The end of poetry is to delight, to ennoble, to elevate, and improve the heart. Let us therefore contemplate nature with the eye of Thomson, stimulate our energy by Gray, awaken our finer feelings by Bowles, lose ourselves in sympathy with Burns, and enlarge our higher sentiment with Cowper.”

To understand the scope of the new feeling for nature and animal life the student should read the following :

Blake, *Songs of Innocence*.

Burns, *To a Mouse*. *Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie*.  
*A Winter Night*. *On Seeing a Wounded Hare Limp by me*.

Cowper, *Epitaph on a Hare*. *The Task*, Book III.

“Well one at least is safe, one sheltered hare,” etc.

Dr. John Brown, *Rab and His Friends*.

Browning, *Saul*, xix. *A Pillar of Sebevar*.

“So let us say — not ‘Since we know, we love !’  
But rather, ‘Since we love, we know enough.’”

*Kaiser Dead*, the last poem that Matthew Arnold gave to the world, is exceedingly interesting in this connection, as in it we see the influence of Burns. It should be compared with Burns's *Poor Mailie's Elegy*, from which it quotes.

In the following noble passage from Cardinal Newman we have the same idea as that which Coleridge voices :

"Can anything," says Newman, "be more marvellous or startling, unless we were used to it, than that we should have a race of beings about us whom we do but see, and as little know their state, or can describe their interests, or their destiny, as we can tell of the inhabitants of the sun and moon? It is indeed a very overpowering thought, when we get to fix our minds on it, that we familiarly use, I may say, hold intercourse with creatures who are as much strangers to us, as mysterious, as if they were fabulous, unearthly beings."

"The misery of keeping a dog," says Sir Walter Scott, "is his dying so soon ; but, to be sure, if he lived for fifty years *and then died*, what would become of me?"

"There is in every animal's eye," says Ruskin, "a dim image and gleam of humanity, a flash of strange light, through which their life looks out and up to our great mystery of command over them, and claims the fellowship of the creature, if not of the soul."

"We are sharers not only of animal but of vegetable life; sharers with the higher brute animals in common instincts and feelings and affections. . . . I fancy that human beings may be more humane when they realize that, as their dependent associates live a life in which man has a share, so they have rights which man is bound to respect." — PROF. ASA GRAY, *Natural Science and Religion*.

"The spirit of Romance that came as the salvation of modern poetry found magical expression in *The Ancient Mariner*. Old age renews itself with memories of youth; and the inspiration of the new life of poetry was from the far-off fields and fountains of the neglected folk-lore of the North. In *The Ancient Mariner* are the two great elements of the folk-tale: love of the marvellous — the supernatural — and love of the lower animals. Wonder is the essence of both, and both are of the essence of religion. True to the world's heart is the recognition of something *real* above and

beyond the *actual* in life; equally true is the reverent awe with which primitive men regarded the migrations and strange instincts of birds and beasts. When man did animals a favor, knowledge of their language was revealed to him, and they saved him from the perils of the forest, the morass, and the flood. Love reads the secret of Nature. Man is not placed in a dead world, but in a universe where living links bind order to order; where there are duties as well as rights; and where, if duties are neglected, interests are injured." — E. CHARLTON BLACK.

Two objections are often brought against *The Ancient Mariner*: one, that it is improbable, and another, that it has no moral. As to these objections Coleridge has the following in his *Table Talk*:

"Mrs. Barbauld once told me that she admired *The Ancient Mariner* very much, but that there were two faults in it, — it was improbable and had no moral. As for the probability, I owned that that might admit some question, but as to the want of moral, I told her that in my own judgment the poem had too much; and that the only, or chief, fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader, as a principle or cause of action in a work of such pure imagination. It ought to have had no more moral than the Arabian Nights tale."

It is not the plan of this volume to furnish the student the various and splendid appreciation of this poem, as revealed in the literature of criticism; but rather to lead him first to appreciate it and then to guide him where these interpretations may be found. I cannot refrain from inserting the following among the most splendid of all. Mrs. Oliphant, after alluding to the stages of growth in the poem until its climax, says: "And then comes the ineffable, half-childish, half-divine simplicity of those soft moralisings at the end, so strangely different from the tenor of the tale, so wonderfully perfecting its visionary strain. After all, the poet seems to say after this weird excursion into the very deepest, awful heart of the seas and mysteries, here is our child's moral, a tender little half-trivial sentiment, yet profound as the blue depths of heaven. This unexpected, gentle conclusion brings our feet back to the common soil with a bewildered sweetness of relief and soft quiet after the prodigious strain of mental excitement, which is like nothing else

we can remember in poetry. . . . The visionary voyage is over, we are back again on the natural soil from which we started; but never more, never again, can the visible and invisible bear to us the same meaning. For once in our lives, if never before, we have passed the borders of the unseen."

"All the elements that compose the perfect form of English metre, as limbs and veins and features, a beautiful body of man, were more familiar, more subject, as it were, to this great poet than to any other. Here is not the speckless and elaborate finish which shows everywhere the rasp of file or chisel on the smooth and spruce excellence; this is faultless, after the fashion of a flower or a tree. Thus it has grown: not thus has it been carved."—A. C. SWINBURNE.

Mr. Saintsbury says: "In the *Mariner* comes the gorgeous metre,—freed at once and for the first time from the 'butter-woman's rank to market,' which had distinguished all imitations of the ballad hitherto,—the more gorgeous imagery and pageantry here, the simple directness there, the tameless range of imagination and fancy, the fierce rush of rhythm. And thereafter the spectre of Life-in-Death, the water-snakes, the rising of the dead men, the snapping of the spell. There had been nothing like all this before; and in all the hundred years, for all the great poetry we have seen, we have seen nothing so *new* as it."

Mr. Coventry Patmore in his *Principle in Art* makes an interesting distinction between *real apprehension* and *real comprehension*. By the former we gain our insight into truths; by the latter our knowledge of facts. One is the organ of the poet, the other that of the man of science. In his *Religio Poetæ* he says: "The Poet is, *par excellence*, the *perceiver*, nothing having any interest for him, unless he can, as it were, see and touch it with the spiritual senses, with which he is pre-eminently endowed. . . . The Poet, again, is not more singular for the delicacy of his spiritual insight, which enables him to see celestial beauty and substantial reality where all is blank to most others, than for the surprising range and alertness of vision, whereby he detects, in external nature, those likenesses and echoes by which spiritual realities can alone be rendered credible, subject to *real apprehension*."

"Wordsworth expressed to me more than once his conviction that if Coleridge had kept to Poetry after his twenty-sixth year (when he deserted it), in place of taking to Metaphysics, he would have been the chief poet of modern times." — AUBREY DE VERE.

In reference to the method and purpose of these notes I will add a word from Mr. Alois Brandl: "The component parts of *The Ancient Mariner* were supplied to Coleridge, but their novel and organic combination was his own; and in art all depends on this power of construction. The real artist comprehends these things intuitively; but to the conscious psychologist they are as hidden as is the origin of life to the biologist. At the same time it is well worth our while to track the artist's footsteps; for the nearer we can come to him the more we instinctively feel the action of genius, both in detail and in general laws."

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LYRICAL BALLADS,

WITH

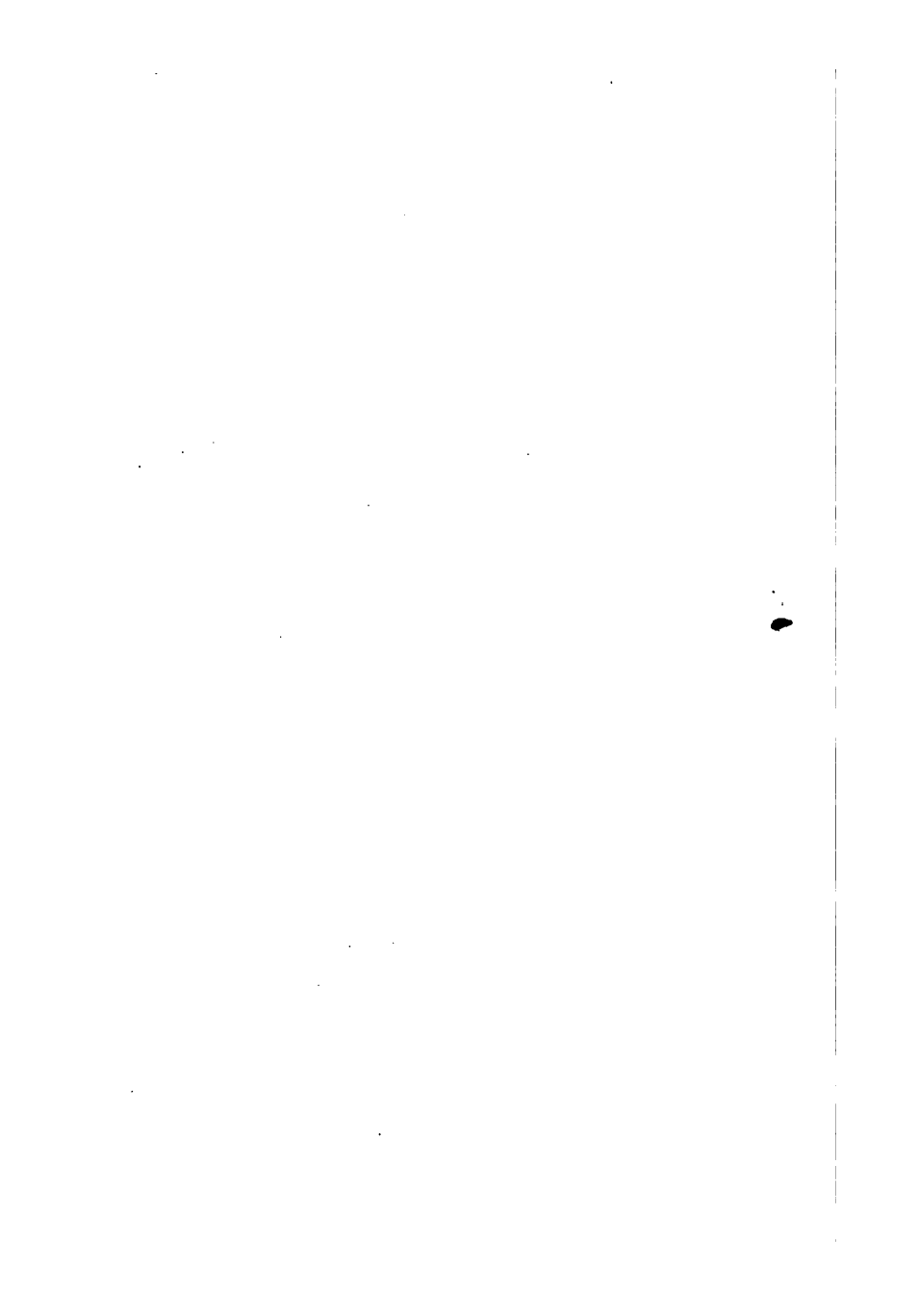
*A FEW OTHER POEMS.*

LONDON :

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1798.





## *ADVERTISEMENT.*

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It is the honourable characteristic of Poetry that its materials are to be found in every subject which can interest the human mind. The evidence of this fact is to be sought, not in the writings of Critics, but in those of Poets themselves.

The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure. Readers accustomed to the

## ii.

gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will perhaps frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness : they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to enquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. It is desirable that such readers, for their own sakes, should not suffer the solitary word Poetry, a word of very disputed meaning, to stand in the way of their gratification ; but that, while they are perusing this book, they should ask themselves if it contains a natural delineation of human passions, human characters, and human incidents ; and if the answer be favourable to the author's wishes, that they should consent to be pleased in spite of that most dreadful enemy to our pleasures, our own pre-established codes of decision.

### iii.

Readers of superior judgment may disapprove of the style in which many of these pieces are executed it must be expected that many lines and phrases will not exactly suit their taste. It will perhaps appear to them, that wishing to avoid the prevalent fault of the day, the author has sometimes descended too low, and that many of his expressions are too familiar, and not of sufficient dignity. It is apprehended, that the more conversant the reader is with our elder writers, and with those in modern times who have been the most successful in painting manners and passions, the fewer complaints of this kind will he have to make.

An accurate taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an acquired talent, which can only be produced by severe thought, and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is

#### iv.

mentioned not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced reader from judging for himself; but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest that if poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous, and that in many cases it necessarily will be so.

The tale of Goody Blake and Harry Gill is founded on a well-authenticated fact which happened in Warwickshire. Of the other poems in the collection, it may be proper to say that they are either absolute inventions of the author, or facts which took place within his personal observation or that of his friends. The poem of the Thorn, as the reader will soon discover, is not supposed to be spoken in the author's own person: the character of the loquacious narrator will sufficiently shew itself in the course of the story. The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere was profes-

## V.

sedly written in imitation of the *style*, as well as of the spirit of the elder poets ; but with a few exceptions, the Author believes that the language adopted in it has been equally intelligible for these last three centuries. The lines entitled Expostulation and Reply, and those which follow, arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy.



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THE RIME  
OF THE  
ANCYENT MARINERE,  
IN  
SEVEN PARTS.



## *ARGUMENT.*

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole ; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean ; and of the strange things that befell ; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.



THE RIME  
OF THE  
ANCYENT MARINERE,  
IN SEVEN PARTS.

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I.

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It is an ancyent Marinere,  
And he stoppeth one of three :  
“ By thy long grey beard and thy glittering eye  
“ Now wherefore stoppest me ?

“ The Bridegroom’s doors are open’d wide  
“ And I am next of kin ;  
“ The Guests are met, the Feast is fet, —  
“ May’st hear the merry din.

But still he holds the wedding-guest —  
There was a Ship, quoth he —  
“ Nay, if thou’st got a laughsome tale,  
“ Marinere ! come with me.”

He holds him with his skinny hand,  
Quoth he, there was a Ship —  
“ Now get thee hence, thou grey-beard Loon !  
“ Or my Staff shall make thee skip.

He holds him with his glittering eye —  
 The wedding guest stood still  
 And listens like a three year's child ;  
 The Marinere hath his will.

The wedding-guest sate on a stone,  
 He cannot chuse but hear :  
 And thus spake on that ancyent man,  
 The bright-eyed Marinere.

The Ship was cheer'd, the Harbour clear'd —  
 Merrily did we drop  
 Below the Kirk, below the Hill,  
 Below the Light-house top.

The Sun came up upon the left,  
 Out of the Sea came he :  
 And he shone bright, and on the right  
 Went down into the Sea.

Higher and higher every day,  
 Till over the mast at noon —  
 The wedding-guest here beat his breast,  
 For he heard the loud bassoon.

The Bride hath pac'd into the Hall,  
 Red as a rose is she ;  
 Nodding their heads before her goes  
 The merry Minstralsy.

The wedding-guest he beat his breast,  
 Yet he cannot chuse but hear ;  
 And thus spake on that ancyent Man,  
 The bright-eyed Marinere.

Listen, Stranger! Storm and Wind,  
 A Wind and Tempest strong !  
 For days and weeks it play'd us freaks —  
 Like Chaff we drove along.

Listen, Stranger! Mist and Snow,  
 And it grew wond'rous cauld :  
 And Ice mast-high came floating by  
 As green as Emerald.

And thro' the drifts the snowy clifts  
 Did send a dismal sheen ;  
 Ne shapes of men ne beasts we ken —  
 The Ice was all between.

The Ice was here, the Ice was there,  
 The Ice was all around :  
 It crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd —  
 Like noises of a swound.

At length did cross an Albatross,  
 Thorough the Fog it came ;  
 And an it were a Christian Soul,  
 We hail'd it in God's name.



The Mariners gave it biscuit-worms,  
 And round and round it flew :  
 The Ice did split with a Thunder-fit ;  
 The Helmsman steer'd us thro'.

And a good south wind sprung up behind,  
 The Albatross did follow ;  
 And every day for food or play  
 Came to the Marinere's hollo !

In mist or cloud on mast or shroud  
 It perch'd for vespers nine,  
 Whiles all the night thro' fog smoke-white  
 Glimmer'd the white moon-shine.

“ God save thee, ancyent Marinere !  
 “ From the fiends that plague thee thus —  
 “ Why look'st thou so ? ” — with my cross  
 I shot the Albatross.

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II.

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The Sun came up upon the right,  
Out of the Sea came he ;  
And broad as a weft upon the left  
Went down into the Sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,  
But no sweet Bird did follow  
Ne any day for food or play  
Came to the Marinere's hollo !

And I had done an hellish thing  
And it would work 'em woe :  
For all averr'd, I had kill'd the Bird  
That made the Breeze to blow.

Ne dim ne red, like God's own head,  
The glorious Sun uprist :  
Then all averr'd, I had kill'd the Bird  
That brought the fog and mist.  
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay  
That bring the fog and mist

---

The breezes blew, the white foam flew,  
 The furrow follow'd free :  
 We were the first that ever burst  
 Into that silent Sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the Sails dropt **down**,  
 'Twas sad as sad could be  
 And we did speak only to break  
 The silence of the Sea.

All in a hot and copper sky  
 The bloody sun at noon,  
 Right up above the mast did **stand**,  
 No bigger than the moon.

Day after day, day after day,  
 We stuck, ne breath ne motion,  
 As idle as a painted Ship  
 Upon a painted Ocean.

Water, water, every where  
 And all the boards did shrink ;  
 Water, water, every where,  
 Ne any drop to drink.

The very deeps did rot : O Chrif !  
 That ever this should be !  
 Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs  
 Upon the slimy Sea.

About, about, in reel and rout  
The Death-fires danc'd at night ;  
The water, like a witch's oils,  
Burnt green and blue and white.

And some in dreams assured were  
Of the Spirit that plagued us so :  
Nine fathom deep he had follow'd us  
From the Land of Mist and Snow.

And every tongue thro' utter drouth  
Was wither'd at the root ;  
We could not speak no more than if  
We had been choked with soot.

Ah wel-a-day ! what evil looks  
Had I from old and young ;  
Instead of the Cross the Albatross  
About my neck was hung.

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 III.
 

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I saw a something in the Sky  
 No bigger than my fist ;  
 At first it seem'd a little speck  
 And then it seem'd a mist :  
 It mov'd and mov'd, and took at last  
 A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !  
 And still it ner'd and ner'd ;  
 And, as it dodg'd a water-sprite,  
 It plung'd and tack'd and veer'd.

With throat unslack'd, with black lips bak'd  
 Ne could we laugh, ne wail :  
 Then while thro' drouth all dumb they stood  
 I bit my arm and suck'd the blood  
 And cry'd, A sail ! a sail !

With throat unslack'd, with black lips bak'd  
 Agape they hear'd me call :  
 Gramercy ! they for joy did grin  
 And all at once their breath drew in  
 As they were drinking all.

She doth not tack from side to side —  
 Hither to work us weal  
 Withouten wind, withouten tide  
 She steddies with upright keel.

The western wave was all a flame,  
 The day was well nigh done !  
 Almost upon the western wave  
 Rested the broad bright Sun ;  
 When that strange shape drove suddenly  
 Betwixt us and the Sun.

And strait the Sun was fleck'd with bars  
 (Heaven's mother send us grace)  
 As if thro' a dungeon grate he peer'd  
 With broad and burning face.

Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)  
 How fast she neres and neres !  
 Are those *ber* Sails that glance in the Sun  
 Like restless gossameres ?

Are those *ber* naked ribs, which fleck'd  
 The sun that did behind them peer ?  
 And are those two all, all the crew,  
 That woman and her fleshless Pheere ?

*His* bones were black with many a crack,  
 All black and bare, I ween ;  
 Jet-black and bare, save where with rust  
 Of mouldy damp and charnel crust  
 They're patch'd with purple and green.

*Her* lips are red, *her* looks are free,  
*Her* locks are yellow as gold :  
 Her skin is as white as leprosy,  
 And she is far liker Death than he ;  
 Her flesh makes the still air cold.

The naked Hulk alongside came  
 And the Twain were playing dice ;  
 "The Game is done ! I've won, I've won !"
   
 Quoth she, and whistled thrice.

A gust of wind sterte up behind  
 And whistled thro' his bones ;  
 Thro' the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth  
 Half-whistles and half-groans.

With never a whisper in the Sea  
 Off darts the Spectre-ship ;  
 While clombe above the Eastern bar  
 The horned Moon, with one bright Star  
 Almost atween the tips.

One after one by the horned Moon  
 (Listen, O Stranger ! to me)  
 Each turn'd his face with a ghastly pang  
 And curs'd me with his ee.

Four times fifty living men,  
 With never a sigh or groan,  
 With heavy thump, a lifeless lump  
 They dropp'd down one by one.

II

Their souls did from their bodies fly, —  
They fled to bliss or woe;  
And every soul it pass'd me by,  
Like the whiz of my Cross-bow.

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 IV.
 

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"I fear thee, ancyent Marinere !  
 "I fear thy skinny hand ;  
 "And thou art long and lank and brown  
 "As is the ribb'd Sea-sand.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye  
 "And thy skinny hand so brown —  
 Fear not, fear not, thou wedding guest !  
 This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all all alone  
 Alone on the wide wide Sea ;  
 And Christ would take no pity on  
 My soul in agony.

The many men so beautiful,  
 And they all dead did lie !  
 And a million million flimy things  
 Liv'd on — and so did I.

I look'd upon the rotting Sea,  
 And drew my eyes away ;  
 I look'd upon the eldritch deck,  
 And there the dead men lay.

I look'd to Heaven, and try'd to pray ;  
 But or ever a prayer had gusht,  
 A wicked whisper came and made  
 My heart as dry as dust.

I clos'd my lids and kept them close,  
 Till the balls like pulses beat ;  
 For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky  
 Lay like a load on my weary eye,  
 And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,  
 Ne rot, ne reek did they ;  
 The look with which they look'd on me,  
 Had never pass'd away.

An orphan's curse would drag to Hell  
 A spirit from on high :  
 But O ! more horrible than that  
 Is the curse in a dead man's eye !  
 Seven days, seven nights I saw that curse,  
 And yet I could not die.

The moving Moon went up the sky  
 And no where did abide :  
 Softly she was going up  
 And a star or two befide —

Her beams bemock'd the sultry main  
 Like morning frosts yspread ;  
 But where the ship's huge shadow lay,  
 The charmed water burnt alway  
 A still and awful red.

Beyond the shadow of the ship  
 I watch'd the water-snakes :  
 They mov'd in tracks of shining white ;  
 And when they rear'd, the elfish light  
 Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship  
 I watch'd their rich attire :  
 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black  
 They coil'd and swam ; and every track  
 Was a flash of golden fire.

O happy living things ! no tongue  
 Their beauty might declare :  
 A spring of love gusht from my heart,  
 And I bless'd them unaware !  
 Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
 And I bless'd them unaware.

The self-same moment I could pray ;  
 And from my neck so free  
 The Albatross fell off, and sank  
 Like lead into the sea.

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V.

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O sleep, it is a gentle thing  
Belov'd from pole to pole !  
To Mary-queen the praise be yeven  
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven  
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck  
That had so long remain'd,  
I dreamt that they were fill'd with dew  
And when I awoke it rain'd.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,  
My garments all were dank ;  
Sure I had drunken in my dreams  
And still my body drank.

I mov'd and could not feel my limbs,  
I was so light, almost  
I thought that I had died in sleep,  
And was a blessed Ghost.

The roaring wind ! it roar'd far off,  
It did not come anear ;

But with its sound it shook the sails  
That were so thin and sere.

The upper air bursts into life,  
And a hundred fire-flags sheen  
To and fro they are hurried about ;  
And to and fro, and in and out  
The stars dance on between.

The coming wind doth roar more loud ;  
The sails do sigh, like sedge :  
The rain pours down from one black cloud  
And the Moon is at its edge.

Hark ! hark ! the thick black cloud is cleft,  
And the Moon is at its side :  
Like waters shot from some high crag,  
The lightning falls with never a jag  
A river steep and wide.

The strong wind reach'd the ship : it roar'd  
And dropp'd down, like a stone !  
Beneath the lightning and the moon  
The dead men gave a groan.

They groan'd, they stirr'd, they all uprose,  
Ne spake, ne mov'd their eyes :  
It had been strange, even in a dream  
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsmen steer'd, the ship mov'd on ;  
Yet never a breeze up-blew ;

The Mariners all 'gan work the ropes,  
 Where they were wont to do :  
 They rais'd their limbs like lifeless tools —  
 We were a ghastly crew.

The body of my brother's son  
 Stood by me knee to knee :  
 The body and I pull'd at one rope,  
 But he said naught to me —  
 And I quak'd to think of my own voice  
 How frightful it would be !

The day-light dawn'd — they dropp'd their arms,  
 And cluster'd round the mast :  
 Sweet sounds rose slowly thro' their mouths  
 And from their bodies pass'd.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,  
 Then darted to the sun :  
 Slowly the sounds came back again  
 Now mix'd, now one by one.

Sometimes a dropping from the sky  
 I heard the Lavrock sing ;  
 Sometimes all little birds that are  
 How they seem'd to fill the sea and air  
 With their sweet jargoning,

And now 'twas like all instruments,  
 Now like a lonely flute ;  
 And now it is an angel's song  
 That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceas'd : yet still the sails made on  
 A pleasant noise till noon,  
 A noise like of a hidden brook  
 In the leafy month of June,  
 That to the sleeping woods all night  
 Singeth a quiet tune.

Listen, O listen, thou Wedding-guest !  
 "Marinere ! thou hast thy will :  
 "For that, which comes out of thine eye, doth make  
 "My body and soul to be still."

Never sadder tale was told  
 To a man of woman born :  
 Sadder and wiser thou wedding-guest !  
 Thou'lt rise to morrow morn.

Never sadder tale was heard  
 By a man of woman born :  
 The Mariners all return'd to work  
 As silent as before.

The Mariners all 'gan pull the ropes,  
 But look at me they n'old :  
 Though I, I am as thin as air —  
 They cannot me behold.

Till noon we silently sail'd on  
 Yet never a breeze did breathe :  
 Slowly and smoothly went the ship  
 Mov'd onward from beneath.

Under the keel nine fathom deep  
 From the land of mist and snow  
 The spirit slid : and it was He  
 That made the Ship to go.  
 The sails at noon left off their tune  
 And the Ship stood still also.

The sun right up above the mast  
 Had fix'd her to the ocean :  
 But in a minute she 'gan stir  
 With a short uneasy motion.  
 Backwards and forwards half her length  
 With a short uneasy motion.

Then, like a pawing horse let go,  
 She made a sudden bound :  
 It flung the blood into my head,  
 And I fell into a swoond.

How long in that same fit I lay,  
 I have not to declare ;  
 But ere my living life return'd,  
 I heard and in my soul discern'd  
 Two voices in the air,

“ Is it he ? quoth one, “ Is this the man ?  
 “ By him who died on cross,  
 “ With his cruel bow he lay'd full low  
 “ The harmless Albatross.

“ The spirit who 'bideth by himself  
 “ In the land of mist and snow,



“ He lov’d the bird that lov’d the man  
“ Who shot him with his bow.

The other was a softer voice,  
As soft as honey-dew :  
Quoth he the man hath penance done,  
And penance more will do.

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VI.

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FIRST VOICE.

“ But tell me, tell me ! speak again,  
 “ Thy soft response renewing —  
 “ What makes that ship drive on so fast ?  
 “ What is the Ocean doing ?

SECOND VOICE.

“ Still as a Slave before his Lord,  
 “ The Ocean hath no blast :  
 “ His great bright eye most silently  
 “ Up to the moon is cast —

“ If he may know which way to go,  
 “ For she guides him smooth or grim.  
 “ See, brother, see ! how graciously  
 “ She looketh down on him.

FIRST VOICE.

“ But why drives on that ship so fast  
 “ Withouten wave or wind ?

## SECOND VOICE.

"The air is cut away before,  
 "And closes from behind.  
  
 "Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high,  
 "Or we shall be belated :  
 "For slow and slow that ship will go,  
 "When the Marinere's trance is abated."

I woke, and we were sailing on  
 As in a gentle weather :  
 'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high ;  
 The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,  
 For a carnel-dungeon fitter :  
 All fix'd on me their stony eyes  
 That in the moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,  
 Had never pass'd away :  
 I could not draw my een from theirs  
 Ne turn them up to pray.

And in its time the spell was snapt,  
 And I could move my een :  
 I look'd far-forth, but little saw  
 Of what might else be seen.

Like one, that on a lonely road  
 Doth walk in fear and dread,

And having once turn'd round, walks on  
 And turns no more his head :  
 Because he knows, a frightful fiend  
 Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breath'd a wind on me,  
 Ne sound ne motion made :  
 Its path was not upon the sea  
 In ripple or in shade.

It rais'd my hair, it fann'd my cheek,  
 Like a meadow-gale of spring —  
 It mingled strangely with my fears,  
 Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,  
 Yet she sail'd softly too :  
 Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —  
 On me alone it blew.

O dream of joy ! is this indeed  
 The light-house top I see ?  
 Is this the Hill ? Is this the Kirk ?  
 Is this mine own countrée ?

We drifted o'er the Harbour-bar,  
 And I with sobs did pray —  
 “ O let me be awake, my God !  
 “ Or let me sleep alway ! ”

The harbour-bay was clear as glass,  
 So smoothly it was strewn !  
 And on the bay the moon light lay,  
 And the shadow of the moon.

The moonlight bay was white all o'er,  
 Till rising from the same,  
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,  
 Like as of torches came.

A little distance from the prow  
 Those dark-red shadows were ;  
 But soon I saw that my own flesh  
 Was red as in a glare.

I turn'd my head in fear and dread,  
 And by the holy rood,  
 The bodies had advanc'd, and now  
 Before the mast they stood.

They lifted up their stiff right arms,  
 They held them strait and tight ;  
 And each right-arm burnt like a torch,  
 A torch that's borne upright.  
 Their stony eye-balls glitter'd on  
 In the red and smoky light.

I pray'd and turn'd my head away  
 Forth looking as before.  
 There was no breeze upon the bay,  
 No wave against the shore.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less  
 That stands above the rock :  
 The moonlight steep'd in silentness  
 The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light,  
 Till rising from the same  
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,  
 In crimson colours came.

A little distance from the prow  
 Those crimson shadows were :  
 I turn'd my eyes upon the deck —  
 O Chrif ! what saw I there ?

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat ;  
 And by the Holy rood  
 A man all light, a seraph-man,  
 On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each wav'd his hand :  
 It was a heavenly sight :  
 They stood as signals to the land,  
 Each one a lovely light :

This seraph-band, each wav'd his hand,  
 No voice did they impart —  
 No voice ; but O ! the silence sank,  
 Like music on my heart.

Eftsones I heard the dash of oars,  
 I heard the pilot's cheer :

My head was turned perforce away  
And I saw a boat appear.

Then vanish'd all the lovely lights ;  
The bodies rose anew :  
With silent pace, each to his place,  
Came back the ghastly crew.  
The wind, that shade nor motion made,  
On me alone it blew.

The pilot, and the pilot's boy  
I heard them coming fast :  
Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy,  
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third — I heard his voice :  
It is the Hermit good !  
He singeth loud his godly hymns  
That he makes in the wood.  
He'll shrive my soul, he'll wash away  
The Albatross's blood.

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VII.

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This Hermit good lives in that wood  
Which slopes down to the Sea.  
How loudly his sweet voice he rears !  
He loves to talk with Marineres  
That come from a far Contrée.

He kneels at morn and noon and eve —  
He hath a cushion plump :  
It is the moss, that wholly hides  
The rotted old Oak-stump.

The Skiff-boat ne'rd : I heard them talk,  
“ Why, this is strange, I trow !  
“ Where are those lights so many and fair  
“ That signal made but now ?

“ Strange, by my faith ! the Hermit said —  
“ And they answer'd not our cheer.  
“ The planks look warp'd, and see those sails  
“ How thin they are and sere !  
“ I never saw aught like to them  
“ Unless perchance it were



" The skeletons of leaves that lag  
   " My forest brook along :  
 " When the Ivy-tod is heavy with snow,  
 " And the Owlet whoops to the wolf below  
   " That eats the she-wolf's young.

" Dear Lord ! it has a fiendish look —  
   (The Pilot made reply)  
 " I am a-fear'd. — " Push on, push on !  
   " Said the Hermit cheerily.

The Boat came closer to the Ship,  
   But I ne spake ne stirr'd !  
 The Boat came close beneath the Ship,  
   And strait a sound was heard !

Under the water it rumbled on,  
   Still louder and more dread :  
 It reach'd the Ship, it split the bay ;  
   The Ship went down like lead.

Stunn'd by that loud and dreadful sound,  
   Which sky and ocean smote :  
 Like one that hath been seven days drown'd  
   My body lay afloat :  
 But, swift as dreams, myself I found  
   Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the Ship,  
   The boat spun round and round :  
 And all was still, save that the hill  
   Was telling of the sound.

I mov'd my lips : the Pilot shriek'd  
 And fell down in a fit.  
 The Holy Hermit rais'd his eyes  
 And pray'd where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,  
 Who now doth crazy go,  
 Laugh'd loud and long, and all the while  
 His eyes went to and fro,  
 "Ha ! ha !" quoth he — "full plain I see;  
 "The devil knows how to row."

And now all in mine own Countrée  
 I stood on the firm land !  
 The Hermit stepp'd forth from the boat,  
 And scarcely he could stand.

"O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy Man !  
 The Hermit cross'd his brow —  
 "Say quick," quoth he, "I bid thee say  
 "What manner man art thou ?

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrench'd  
 With a woeful agony,  
 Which forc'd me to begin my tale  
 And then it left me free.

Since then at an uncertain hour,  
 Now oftimes and now fewer,  
 That anguish comes and makes me tell  
 My ghastly aventure.

I pass, like night, from land to land ;  
 I have strange power of speech ;  
 The moment that his face I see  
 I know the man that must hear me ;  
 To him my tale I teach.

What loud uproar bursts from that door !  
 The Wedding-guests are there ;  
 But in the Garden-bower the Bride  
 And Bride-maids singing are :  
 And hark the little Vesper-bell  
 Which biddeth me to prayer.

O Wedding-guest ! this soul hath been  
 Alone on a wide wide sea :  
 So lonely 'twas, that God himself  
 Scarce seemed there to be.

O sweeter than the Marriage-feast,  
 'Tis sweeter far to me  
 To walk together to the Kirk  
 With a goodly company.

To walk together to the Kirk  
 And all together pray,  
 While each to his great father bends,  
 Old men, and babes, and loving friends,  
 And Youths, and Maidens gay.

Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell  
 To thee, thou wedding-guest !

He prayeth well who loveth well,  
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best who loveth best,  
All things both great and small :  
For the dear God, who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all.

The Marinere, whose eye is bright,  
Whose beard with age is hoar,  
Is gone ; and now the wedding-guest  
Turn'd from the bridegroom's door.

He went, like one that hath been stunn'd  
And is of sense forlorn :  
A sadder and a wiser man  
He rose the morrow morn.

## APPENDIX.

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IN the edition of 1800 the archaisms of spelling and phrases disappeared, and there were the following changes from that of 1798

### THE ANCIENT MARINER, A POET'S REVERIE.

#### ARGUMENT.

"How a Ship, having first sailed to the Equator, was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; how the Ancient Mariner, cruelly, and in contempt of the laws of hospitality, killed a Sea-bird; and how he was followed by many strange Judgments; and in what manner he came back to his own Country."

#### PART I.

*Stanza xii.* **Listen Stranger!** etc. Instead of this and the five lines following, there was:

"But now the Northwind came more fierce,  
There came a Tempest strong!  
And Southward still for days and weeks  
Like chaff we drove along.

"And now there came both Mist and Snow,  
And it grew wondrous cold; "

*Stanza xv.* **Like noises in a swoond.** For this line there was:

"A wild and ceaseless sound."

Coleridge afterward returned to the reading of 1798.

*Stanza xix.* **Fog smoke-white.** Corrected in the *Errata* to "fog-smoke white."

## PART III.

*Stanza i. I saw a something in the sky.* In place of this and the following line, this stanza was inserted :

“So past a weary time; each throat  
Was parch'd and glaz'd each eye,  
When, looking westward, I beheld  
A something in the sky.”

*Stanza ix. Are those her naked ribs, etc.* Instead of this stanza was the following :

“Are these *her* Ribs, thro' which the Sun  
Did peer, as thro' a grate?  
And are these two all, all her crew,  
That Woman, and her Mate !”

## PART V.

*Stanza xii. And I quak'd, etc.* This and the following line omitted.

*Stanzas xviii.-xxi. Listen, O listen, etc.* These four stanzas omitted.

## PART VI.

*Stanzas xvii.-xxi. The moonlight lay, etc.* These five stanzas omitted.

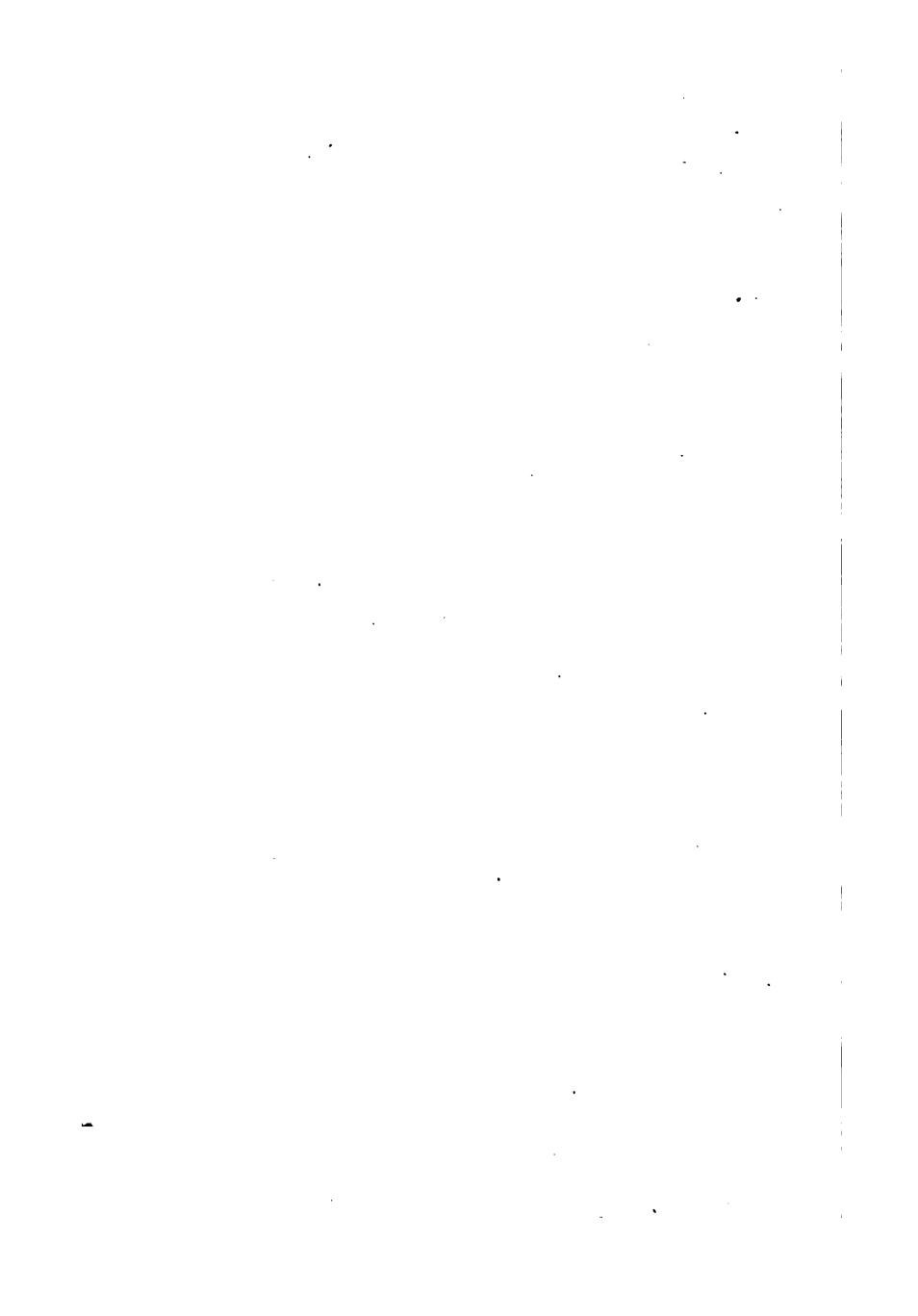
*Stanza xxix. Then vanish'd, etc.* This stanza omitted.

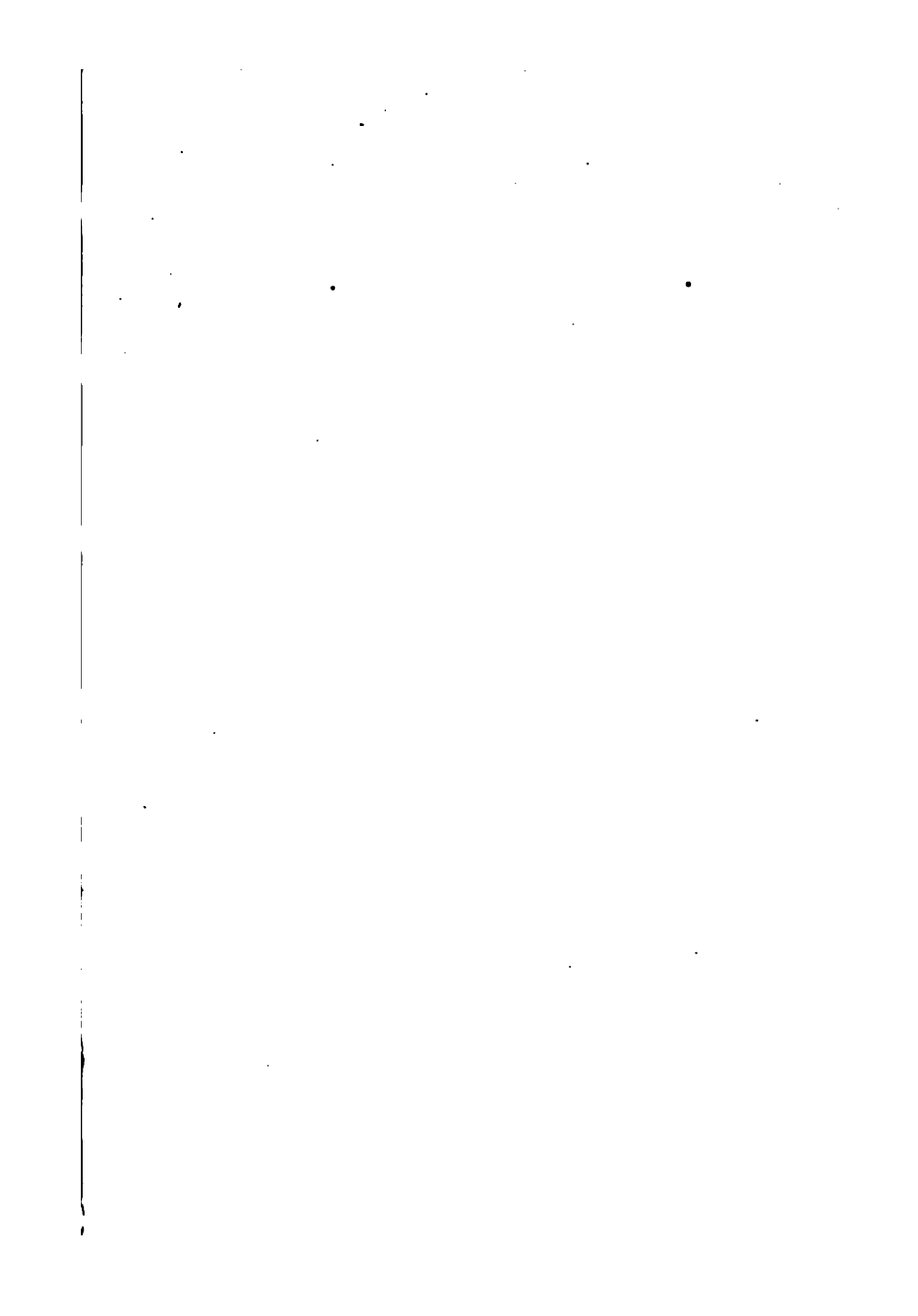
## PART VII.

*Stanza xvi. Since then at an uncertain hour, etc.* Instead of this stanza is the following :

“Since then at an uncertain hour  
That agony returns;  
And till my ghastly tale is told  
This heart within me burns.”

*Cf. Works of Coleridge, J. Dykes Campbell.*







11

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